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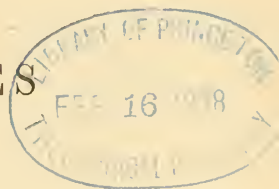
The memory of the dead

My dear Mother
I have not
time to write



The Memory of the Dead.

SEPULCHRES



OF

OUR DEPARTED.

BY
REV. F. R. ANSPACH, A.M.,
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND.

As flowers which night, when day is o'er, perfume,
Breathes the sweet memory from a good man's tomb.

SIR E. B. LYTON.

Third Edition.

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“WE honor the memory of that virtue which shall never die; we honor those ashes, which the confession of faith has consecrated: we honor in them the seeds of eternity. We honor then the body which Christ himself honored in the sword, and which with Him, will remain in Heaven.” — AMBROSE, Tom. ii. p. 467.

Affectionately Inscribed

BY THE AUTHOR

TO

L I L L Y,

HIS WIFE,

WHO IS THE SUN OF HIS DOMESTIC CIRCLE,

AND THE DEWS OF WHOSE GENTLE SPIRIT CLOTHE,

WITH THE FRAGRANCE OF FILIAL AFFECTION,

THE FLOWERS THAT STILL REMAIN

AND ADORN THE GARDEN

OF HIS HOME.

P R E F A C E .



IN presenting this offering, it is proper that the author should accompany it with a brief statement of the reasons which were influential in its preparation.

It is certainly to be regretted, that the earthly resting places of the dead are so frequently found in a condition of dilapidation and neglect. A grave in ruins is such a mournful spectacle that it saddens the heart, and throws additional terrors around death. It fills us with thoughts so gloomy and distressing, that we turn from it with pain, and lose the influence of those cheering and softening emotions, which should be evoked in our visits to the sepulchre. The tombs of our sainted ones should be ranked among our sacred things. They deserve to be cherished and guarded with religious concern. And so fully is the writer persuaded of the importance of cultivating a devout regard for the depositories of the dead, that he has prepared this work with a view to direct attention to the subject, and to contribute something to deepen and encourage a feeling which affection inspires and religion sanctifies.

Another object contemplated in the preparation of this volume has been, to assist the bereaved to improve their afflictions for permanent spiritual good. It is designed to be a companion for the sorrowing. It is an attempt to administer the oil and balm of the Gospel to wounded hearts; to diminish the weight of grief, and alleviate the pains of separation entailed upon us by the death of friends; and to reconcile shrinking Nature to its inevitable fate, by giving expression to those considerations of hope, of peace and glory, which Christianity throws around the ashes of our departed.

But the author indulges the hope, that while it will subserve the purposes indicated, it may also be interesting and profitable to those who are free from the pressures and pains of affliction. For the topics discussed are so vitally connected with the great interests of man here, and so intimately blended with his destiny hereafter, that clothed with the light of hope, they constitute pleasant themes for meditation with those who are looking forward to a happy immortality.

HAGERSTOWN, Feb. 17, 1854.

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THE
SEPULCHRES OF OUR DEPARTED.

CHAPTER FIRST.

COMMUNION WITH THE PAST.

“Voice after voice hath died away,
Once in my dwelling heard;
Sweet household name, by name hath chang'd
To grief's forbidden word!
From dreams of night on each I call,
Each of the far remov'd;
And waken to my own wild cry—
Where are ye, my belov'd?”

It is the dictate of philosophy and religion to cherish the memories which bind us to the past. To turn occasionally from the stirring scenes around us, to hold communion with the persons and events of that silent world which follows on the march of time, is alike profitable and pleasant. For if judiciously controlled, this intercourse of the thoughts with that which has been, assists us in estimating and appreciating that which is, while it qualifies us

for that which is to come. The past is an immense depository, where bygone ages have stored their treasures. Thither should the living repair, to gather the gold of experience and the gems of wisdom. Lessons of rare value may be gleaned from the written scroll of time. For it is only after we have surveyed the ample page of history, and wandered along that great highway which begins in Eden, and upon which the world's population has journeyed for six thousand years, and carefully studied the monuments of their intellectual and moral triumphs, that we learn the capabilities of the human mind. And it is in like manner from attentively contemplating the trials and misfortunes which those who have gone before us encountered and overcame, that we may gather fortitude to arm ourselves for life's conflicts, and wisdom to derive lasting good from the adversities incident to our earthly pilgrimage. The traveller who has crossed the Alps, or traversed the desert, may, by his recorded experience, greatly benefit others, who, from choice or necessity, undertake a similar journey.

But it is not so much upon distant ages that we would fix our meditations, nor yet hold communion with the distinguished of remote periods, as to call up those with whom we once held sweet counsel, and whose forms are still enshrined in the sanctuary of our souls. And that it is in accordance with the Divine will that we should sometimes be occupied in such exercises, seems manifest from the nature of our mental and moral constitutions. Our benevolent Creator has bestowed upon us an organization which neither limits

us to the present, nor makes us exclusively dependent upon surrounding objects, for all our enjoyments. He has endowed us with memories of such retentive energies, that all the events, painful or pleasant, which make up the record of our experience, and all the persons with whom these are associated, are summoned at our pleasure before the mind. Upon the ample pages of that faculty which keeps us apprized of what we have known and felt, are painted with great accuracy all the joyous scenes of youth. And in that group of pictures which impressed themselves there, in all the vivid colorings of the spring-time of life, there is not one that we would willingly efface. Those rural scenes, amid which we spent the morning of our existence, have left such delightful impressions, that they are contemplated with satisfaction up to the evening of our life. Those noble mountains in whose deep shadows we have wandered, and those blooming vales where flowed the crystal stream on whose moss-covered banks we innocently gamboled, and those fountains from which we drank refreshing draughts, can never be forgotten. And to remember the companions who shared in the enjoyment of those scenes, and participated in the amusements of our childhood, not as men and women, but as children clothed in their innocence and beauty, is a pleasure of which we would be reluctantly deprived.

But above all, would we deplore the loss of those images of dear departed ones, which are so distinctly engraved upon the tablets of memory, and with whom the most interesting reminiscences of our life are associated. Although days,

and months, and years may have elapsed since inexorable death bade us surrender the bodies of cherished ones to the grave, and their spirits to God, yet are they still present to our minds, beautiful and life-like. And who does not realize a melancholy pleasure in recalling departed ones, be their images clothed with the innocence and loveliness of youth, or marked by the cares and sorrows of age? And are not those hours of solitude, which the bereaved people with the recollections and endearments of other days, refreshing to them, as pilgrims, who are hastening onward to that blissful inheritance, where those move and shine who were once fellow-travellers on earth? So sacred are the memories which come thronging from departed joys, and so fragrant with the odors of crushed hopes, that the mother from whose crown of rejoicing has been plucked her brightest jewel, often withdraws herself from the circle of the living, to hold communion with him whose voice is no more heard, and whose seat around the hearth is no longer filled. Ay, those are holy moments, when at least in thought she presses her loved one to her throbbing bosom. And far dearer and richer in enjoyment than all the excitements of worldly pleasure, are such seasons of retirement and meditation to her, who was scarcely appareled in her bridal robes, before a mysterious, but wise providence bade her assume the weeds of mourning. And infinitely more precious than the golden offerings of earth are those moments to her, when alone she recalls the manly form of the noble husband, to whom she had fondly and securely clung, as the frail

forest vine clings to the sturdy oak. And in like manner does the hoary-headed sire, who is ascending the last heights of the "delectable mountains," where strains of celestial melody come hastening on the air, and the sky is tinged with the brilliant hues of that glory into which he hopes soon to enter, find pleasure in communing with those who have long since quitted the turmoils of earth, and gone to that abode of peace, "where the weary are at rest." And such is the tendency in all whose faculties are not paralyzed and whose sensibilities are not blunted, that it may be truly affirmed that nature and religion admonish us not to forget or neglect the departed.

There are also many to whom there is little left but departed joys. And it is a distinguished favor and a merciful provision of our heavenly Father, that human hearts can re-live and re-enjoy forever all that was beautiful and good in the annals of personal experience. It is upon that which memory supplies from scenes fled forever, in connection with that which hope furnishes from the future, that some hearts live. For there are not a few to whom the present, with all its activities and excitement, is void of pleasure. Persons whose known and felt duties are discharged in a manner which indicates very clearly that the springs of action have received a stunning blow, and that the affections are somewhere else. Go with me to that mansion externally embellished with all the marks of affluence, and within gorgeously furnished with all the comforts and decorations which a refined taste could suggest and wealth command, and what do

we see? An air of silence and of gloom pervades those halls once filled with light and joyous hearts. Behold the mistress of that palace, formerly so brilliant and happy, now so sad and pale. All her movements are mechanically performed; and her conversation is destitute of spirit. Why is that brow, where once played the light of hope, shrouded with care? Why are those eyes from which gleamed a constant sunshine, so dim with much weeping? And why is that countenance, once wreathed in winning smiles, now covered with a fixed and oppressive sadness? O! it is the blight of death which has fallen upon that home, and its shadow still lingers upon its inmates. That mother is often missed by the members of the household; and when sought, is found by that little bed in which the loved one last slept, or seated by that drawer in which she had deposited the memorials of her departed; and one by one she looks over the toys which had amused her child, and the garments which it wore, and the golden locks which adorned his brow while living. These are links of communication between the living and the dead; they are silent messengers recalling many kind words, affectionate smiles, and pleasant endearments, in which this bereaved one once delighted. Wearily pass the hours, and heavily does the day wear away, for a weighty sorrow clogs the wheels of time.

And as the light of day withdraws, and the quiet evening brings the husband from the scenes of his toil, it is not the cheerfulness of other days which irradiates his countenance as he enters his home. For he hears no little footsteps pat-

tering over the hall to greet him with their childish welcome. He is solemn and thoughtful. A shade of sadness steals over his features, while involuntary sighs rise from out the holiest depths of his being. Those merry voices of innocents which were wont to thrill his soul are all hushed ; and those sounds which were to him the sweetest earthly melodies that could greet his ear, have died away, and he only hears their faint echoes reverberating through the chambers of memory. Distant and indistinct, yet charming his thoughts away to the period when his circle was unbroken, and no lamb was missing from the flock. And not only does the deserted place of the hearth remind them that their home has lost some of its attractions, but their desolateness of heart, and the suggestions of the things around them, bid those bereaved parents to seek comfort in communion with the past. Nature, in her varying aspects, wakens remembrances of other days, and, therefore, inculcates the same lesson.

Spring, bright, beautiful spring, comes with its soft winds, its singing birds, and blooming flowers. But fitted as this season is to inspire delightful feelings, and awaken pleasant emotions ; the year in its youth also brings with it, fresh recollections of the departed. It is suggestive of painful reminiscences, so that while it loosens the fetters of the ice-bound streams in nature, and sends them laughing on their way ; it also opens afresh the fountains of grief in human hearts by the remembrances which it brings. For it tells us of those who were arrayed in the freshness and loveliness of

the spring-time of life, but who faded before the blossom had been succeeded by the fruit. And while the melodies of sweet warblers are floating on the air, they remind us of accents, which shall no more be uttered on earth. The flowers which we had planted, spring up to reward our labor. We had their seeds brought from a foreign clime, we cherished and tended them, and now, as if with gratitude to the eyes that watched them, and the hands that cultivated them, they wake into life under the warm breath of the south-wind, and unfold their delicate leaves to the kissing sunbeams, while they bathe the atmosphere with their delicious fragrance. But these are also links which bind us to the past, because emblems of our faded glory. They seem endowed with speech; for their unsullied purity, their delicate structure, their sweetness and their frailty, all vividly picture to our minds those flowers which the hand of heaven had planted in the garden of our home, but which had scarcely bloomed before they withered. Thus it happens, that this season, flushed with so many beauties, and radiant with so many joys, carries us back to the period, when hands now mouldering in the dust gathered with us the violet and the lily, and hearts, now still, beat warm to ours, as together we rested by the warbling brook, or rejoiced in rambles through field and forest. Blessed, joyous days were those! And blessed be God, that we can recall those scenes, and feel those joys which then flowed in untroubled streams through the channels of our being!

And as the flowery and joyous spring rolls into the golden

summer, we find new monitors to connect our meditations with summers and friends long since gone. The golden harvests remind us of those, who were brought to the grave — “Like as a shock of corn cometh in his season,” full of days and honors. The ripe grain and matured fruits of the earth, speak of venerable parents, “who having served their day and generation according to the will of God, fell asleep and were gathered to their fathers.” And while this season revives recollections of the aged good, and those who were cut down in the midst of life loaded with such honors as a grateful people can bestow ; it also brings to our remembrance those buds of promise which were early transplanted to that clime where no withering winds blow, and no burning suns consume, but where eternal youth clothes the immortals.

And as we are ushered into autumn with its sered foliage, the countless deaths which we witness in expiring nature cause us to think of the beloved who have passed away as the grass of the field, and whose glory has faded as the flower of the grass. And while emotions of regret are kindling within us, the mournful sighings of autumnal winds through the stubble and naked shrubbery breathe notes of sadness which symphonize with the music of our bereaved hearts. The leaves quivering for a moment in the sharp blast, then rustling through the boughs in their descent to the earth, proclaim the frailty of man. “For we do all fade as the leaf.” And in the lofty oak stripped of its foliage and stretching its bare arms out towards heaven as if in supplication that the few leaves which yet tremble on its branches

might be spared by the gale, we have a fit emblem of many a parent who like Jacob of old utters his touching complaint, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and now would ye also take Benjamin away? All these things are against me."

And thus also when winter comes, it too calls up thoughts of the departed. As the mother composes her little ones to rest, and draws around them the curtains to shield them from the cold air, she thinks of those who sleep far away in the silent grave, over whom the night winds blow, and for whom the drifting snow forms the only covering. And when seated around the cheerful fire, we do not blame her for dropping those silent tears as she muses on the past. And how painfully do those festival occasions, the happy Christmas, and the merry New Year, remind us all of those who once participated in the innocent amusements of those seasons! Those time-honored festivals seem invested with a sort of enchantment which peoples the hour with all those with whom we ever enjoyed sweet fellowship. I know not why, but to my mind there is a mysterious influence connected with the recurrence of Christmas which irresistibly attracts me to kindred souls. As the shades of the evening gather around me, I seem to hear the fond inquiries and kind greetings of absent friends as they were wont to break upon my ears, and thoughts of other days come thronging back upon my mind like spirits from a distant tomb;—thoughts, some bright and beautiful as the images of angels, and others robed in gloomy apparel, and breathing soft notes of melancholy through my soul. And in that hour the veil of oblivion is

lified and I see all my past life opened to my view, and each recurrence of this festival stands radiant with those joys with which my happy childhood crowned it. And prompted by those yearnings of my spirit for kindred souls, I exclaim, "O, that I had the wings of a dove," then would I fly to my distant loved ones. I would hasten to greet my aged father at his fireside, and breathe a prayer at his knees. I would pass from home to home, until I had mingled in the joys or sorrows of all whom my soul loveth. I would leave those earthly abodes and ascend into heaven, and seek among the armies of the skies my dear sainted ones, and commission one of those sons of light to wing his flight to all my beloved, and shake upon their happy circles odors borne fresh from the paradise of God. But as it is only in thought that I can obey these impulses of my being, I never fail on those occasions to breathe the prayer, that He who was born in Bethlehem, may be born in every heart, and find a home in every family; and that the myrrh and incense of grateful souls may be poured upon the altar of Him, who assumed our nature, that we might share his glory. And while such feelings and yearnings are not peculiar to an individual, but shared in common by all whose sensibilities are alive to the force with which the law of association operates, it is not marvellous that on such occasions our sainted friends should be more vividly presented to us, than at any other time. And it is therefore not singular that, while we make our little gifts to those whom a kind Providence still continues with us, the images of those who have gone to heaven should be fre-

quently recalled. And then, and then only, can we realize the extent of that void which the removal of one little cherub produces. It has been beautifully said, "that nothing on earth casts so long a shadow as the little coffin." And small as are those graves which hold their infant remains, they are sufficiently capacious, to gather within their embrace the dearest joys and fondest hopes of parental hearts. Ye blest little slumberers, ye know not how you fill our thoughts, and blend with all our feelings—how our affections now linger around your precious dust, and now rise to your blissful abode on high.

That very interesting associations are kept alive with the departed, that kind feelings are fostered, and that the most tender recollections of them linger in the memories of the living, is abundantly manifest from the many testimonials of undying affection which adorn the places of their repose.

Laurel Hill Cemetery, that charming city of many dead, will furnish us with illustrations of this truth. Often have I regarded with admiration the efforts of survivors, as exhibited within that sacred enclosure, to perpetuate the remembrance of those who were dear to them. There we meet with many tokens which eloquently express the language of wounded, but loving hearts. There is one little grave there, on which the figure of a lamb, in a state of repose, speaks to us the thoughts which are cherished of the innocence, gentleness, and rest of the slumberer. There is another, where stands the guardian angel with his eye fixed upon the slumbering dust; thus imaging the security and happiness of the departed,

and reminding the survivors that their sainted are under the guardianship of angels, and the companions of those blessed spirits who minister to the heirs of salvation. And there, too, has the sculptor's chisel fashioned out of marble the rose-bud, and the half-blown flower, broken from the parent stem and fallen to the earth. And there, also, lies separated from the stock, the lily, as fresh and white as though it had just dropped. Again, we behold the well-formed urn, the broken shaft, the anchor and the cross, all appropriate and significant symbols, speaking the language of affection, of regret, and of hope, from living and loving hearts. And still more delicate and touching offerings of friendship are seen, in the many vases and wreaths of choice flowers which are daily laid upon the tombs. These tokens of affection assure us that warm hearts fondly throb around those places where beloved ones repose. Even *that stranger* who sought and obtained a resting-place on the verge of that bank laved by the gentle Schuylkill, is not forgotten, for his grave is often fragrant from the tributes furnished by delicate hands.

And not only may we learn from the attractive manner in which these tombs are adorned, but also from their inscriptions, that their inmates were loved, and that they are remembered. The value of these chaste and costly monuments is frequently enhanced by the sublime sentiments which constitute their records. Let us pause a moment before some of these memorials of departed worth, and examine the inscriptions dictated by piety and affection. There is the stately

pile which marks the resting-place of the philanthropist, and we read —

“A friend to the fatherless, and his bounty caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.”

“The blessing of those who were ready to perish, came upon him.”

There is the tomb of a beloved parent, with this inscription :

“Our mother sleeps! when will the morning dawn?”

Here also is one erected by a Christian congregation in memory of him who broke unto them the bread of life, and their feelings have found expression in the language of the prophet. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

And not far distant do we find the epitaph of a weary pilgrim, who hoped and longed for heaven. “Think of me as a wanderer who hath found his home!”

And what breathings of tenderness and words of hope do we find on the marble of those many little graves, which we meet in every enclosure consecrated to the dead. In one of these there are two reposing, whose spirits, only a few hours apart, took wing for the bosom of God; and it is written of them —

“Lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.”

“Side by side they’re sweetly sleeping—
Little loved ones early blest;

Free from care and pain and sorrow,
Oh! rejoice they are at rest."

And there is yet another, who sleeps lonely and far removed from those in whose family crown he shines as the first immortal gem with which God adorned it, whose grave is guarded by kind friends, and whose history is written on his tomb-stone in the sublime words of the great Redeemer! "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Perhaps there are individuals whose sympathies are not in unison with sentiments like these, and who may be disposed to smile at those expressions of tenderness, which fond hearts have caused to be engraved upon the slab which designates the spot where their beloved repose; but such are either void of sensibility, or they have never tasted the cup of bereavement, and are therefore not competent judges of what is, or is not, a fitting epitaph. Even if those little records are sometimes crude in sentiment, or not remarkable for the taste which has decided upon their appropriateness, they yet possess an air of sacredness which forbids criticism, even on the part of those whose culture and refinement qualify them to discriminate between what is, and what is not, offensive to good taste. It is not often the language of adulation, but that of the heart, which is found upon the tomb; and therefore it is not the intellect, but the heart, which should sit in judgment upon it. But those who know from personal experience, what it is to pass through the deep waters of affliction, and who have felt the pain which accompanies the severance of a shoot of life from the heart, will behold beauty, pro-

priety, and meaning in those little records, which the inexperienced in such trials may not be able to discover. Nature seldom if ever acts wrongly, when its operations are in conformity with those laws which the Creator has ordained for its government. And where reason discharges its appropriate functions, and religion controls these human tendencies, those expressions of grief and of hope on the part of the bereaved are perfectly consistent, because consonant with the laws of our being. And instead of censuring the practice of writing in modest language on the tomb of a friend, the virtues with which his character was jeweled, and thus spreading out to the public eye the history of one whose calling and condition in life precluded the probability of his being extensively and intimately known, we would rather encourage it, for the reason that it cannot injure any one, while it may benefit some. For the tomb-stone has sometimes been a successful preacher; — one whose discourses have produced effects upon the careless, which other instructions could not accomplish. In some instances it has been instrumental in begetting immortal hope in souls which, until brought within its influence, were never animated with gratitude and love to God.

Leigh Richmond, a man of blessed memory, who was honored with many seals to his ministry, gives an interesting account, in the "Young Cottager," of the impressions which the reading of those records on the tomb-stones around the church, where he was accustomed to meet the children of his parish, to instruct them in the principles of the gospel, made

upon that child's mind. "Sometimes," he says, "I sent the children to the various stones which stood at the head of the graves, and bade them learn the epitaphs inscribed upon them." On one occasion he sent the little cottage girl to commit the following epitaph, which he greatly admired.

"Forgive, blest shade, the tributary tear,
That mourns thy exit from a world like this;
Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
And stay'd thy progress to the seats of bliss.

"No more confin'd to grov'ling scenes of night,
No more a tenant pent in mortal clay,
Now should we rather hail thy glorious flight
And trace thy journey to the realms of day."

Having finished her task, she returned and informed her instructor that she had also learned the following, which he subsequently discovered had deeply impressed her mind:

"It must be so — our father Adam's fall
And disobedience, brought this lot on all.
All die in him — but hopeless should we be,
Blest Revelation, were it not for thee.
Hail, glorious gospel! heavenly light, whereby
We live with comfort, and with comfort die,
And view beyond this gloomy scene, the tomb,
A life of endless happiness to come."

According to her dying testimony, the influence of those epitaphs, in connection with the instructions of her pastor, which were frequently enforced by illustrations drawn from the grave-yard, was instrumental in her salvation.

And there are, no doubt, many of that multitude who now stand radiant with glory in the presence of God, who will forever, and with gratitude, remember lessons which they

learned in the places of sepulture on earth. And while the Holy Spirit has thus made sentiments, chronicled upon the marble, vehicles through which He has entered and renovated hearts, we find in such results, as well as in that communion of souls which they promote, a sufficient warrant for the erection of appropriate memorials to departed friends, and an ample vindication of the practice of inscribing thereon such epitaphs as nature and religion may suggest.

And in addition to the considerations already presented, we might urge as another argument for the propriety of holding communion with the past, the soothing influence which it has upon bereaved souls. The present may offer to the contemplation of an individual a complete prostration of his fondest expectations, and spread around him an utterly cheerless desolation. Clouds and darkness may hang about our path, and the mind may not be able to seize upon a single sustaining principle or object fitted to inspire light and courage. But as David frequently sustained his spirit by the memory of past mercies, so there may be bright pictures along the pathway of life over which we have journeyed, where our dying hopes may be rekindled.

“There’s not a heath, however rude,
But hath some little flower
To brighten up its solitude,
And scent the evening hour.
There’s not a heart, however cast
By grief or sorrow down,
But hath some memory of the past,
To love and call its own.”

The bee does not with truer instinct guide its flight to the

far-off flower, than the mind throws its thoughts back to those brighter scenes which have gladdened former days. It may be that these sensations of pleasure which float along those chords of association which connect the present with happier scenes, account for the singular phenomenon, that the sweetest of all melody to the wounded and weary is the music of their own breaking hearts. But the influence of the exercise here recommended does not produce only a mollifying and quieting effect upon lacerated hearts, but it may also be made subservient to the interests of our salvation. It is a subject of frequent remark, that few persons are permanently benefited by those providential dispensations which desolate their homes. The death of a cherished friend which at first overwhelmed the heart with the deepest sorrow, becomes less painful as the period of its occurrence is removed. And as the picture loses its vividness in the distance, the resolutions of improvement which had been formed are forgotten. This will be the inevitable result where first impressions are not strengthened and guided to a blessed issue, by frequently recalling the scene of trial and considering the end which it was intended to accomplish. It is well, therefore, to carry the lessons of their bereavement with them into their retirement, and there consider calmly the dealings of God with them. And we doubt not that the most disconsolate may have their sorrows so judiciously and tenderly directed, that their mourning will issue in rejoicing; and the harps which have long hung unstrung upon the willows will again be tuned, and swept to the praise of Him whose ways are unsearchable, but whose judgments are right.

But if we would attain the highest benefits of affliction, we must command such a scope for our meditations as to associate the occurrences of other days with those great realities which are still future ; for it is from comprehensive views of human destiny and the Divine government, that we derive valuable lessons and solid consolation. The effulgence of those eternal realities which stand out to the vision of faith, has its lustre augmented by the reflected glow of our departed days of sunshine. For while our affections fondly linger around the graves which contain all that was earthly in our beloved, our thoughts are charmed away to that bright inheritance which their spirits have gone to possess. And heaven has already become more attractive to us, because *they* are there. The eternal song rises in louder and sweeter harmonies, because the voices whose music gladdened us on earth are mingling in the hymns of Cherubim and Seraphim. The white-robed multitude is arrayed in a more brilliant glory, because our sainted ones are of that number. And the lustre of the New Jerusalem has become more resplendent, because in the midst of its glories *our* jewels shine. Blessed, holy ones! how beautiful you make the memories of the past, how radiant the prospects of the future! It cannot be wrong to indulge in such reflections, for they are eminently fitted to assist us in our preparations for a better world. That they may be made tributary to this end is abundantly manifest from that capability of the human mind which enables it to contemplate with satisfaction those things aniable in others,

the very consideration of which will foster a love for all that exalts them in our estimation. By such a process as this may the living incorporate into their own characters those virtues which they most valued in their departed. And thus our growth in moral excellence will be promoted, and we will endear ourselves to those with whom we are associated, thereby enlarging our sphere of usefulness. Were they blameless in their deportment? So may we become innocent. Were they distinguished for kindness of heart and gentleness of temper? In us these may also form prominent characteristics. Did their presence diffuse a glow of happiness as doth the blessed sunshine? We may imitate their example, and become a blessing to those around us. Was their piety the steady brilliant light of true heart-devotion? Upon our hearts also may the Divine fire burn, and make us "the light of the world." Did hope illumine their hour of dissolution, and did their spirits take wing from the radiant summit of salvation? By a similar course of life "our death may be that of the righteous, and our last end like unto his." If we subject our hearts to those influences which operated so advantageously for them, we may expect like blessed effects. Take the highest type of Christian character—it is formed by a combination of the loftiest of known virtues; its possessor is a centre of light, and exerts a fragrant influence, and makes the ways of piety attractive by his gentle and Christ-like spirit: still this standard of excellence lies within the reach of every humble and sincere follower of

Jesus. Surviving friends may gather all these blessed fruits by recalling the excellencies of their sainted ones, if they are animated with a similar purpose, accompanied with like perseverance and faith. And by such an importation of the virtues which shone in the characters of our departed into our being, we will derive lasting benefit from communion with the Past. And it is by such means that our Heavenly father will cause "our light afflictions to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Thus, under the tuition of the Holy Spirit, we may gather honey out of the mouth of the destroyer, while a gracious Providence wreathes our clouds of dark calamity with brilliant bows of promise. From these considerations we may see the propriety of holding communion with the past; for it brings the virtues of the departed good into collected forms, and makes them flaming orbs, whose light gilds the pathway of life and makes our future radiant with immortal hopes.

CHAPTER SECOND.

THE SACREDNESS OF THE SEPULCHRE.

“Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still, erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implore the passing tribute of a sigh.
Their name, their years, spelt by the unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply ;
And many a holy text around she strews,
To teach the rustic moralist to die.
For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind.
On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.”

AMONG the instincts which do honor to human nature, there is none deserving of more exalted rank than that which causes us to respect the dead, and constrains us to regard as religiously sacred the places of their repose. (The shrines of the dead are holy.) A mysterious sacredness encompasseth the sepulchres of the departed. There is a stillness about the grave which breathes an air of quietness over all the

scenery around it, and which invests every object with a silent, but impressive power. The atmosphere seems to partake of the sanctity of the place, and the winds blow in softer whispers, because they sigh their requiems over the dead. Even the trees and flowers do not there appear as gay and brilliant as elsewhere, but are tinged with those pleasing melancholy hues which the grave only can impart. The graveyard and cemetery are not common ground. They are enclosures where all is not earthly; for there the living and the dead hold communion, and the influences of two worlds blend. God has clothed these acres, where seed for the resurrection morn is sown, with a sacredness which none but the grossly profane can venture to disturb; while He has also implanted in the hearts of the living such sentiments of reverence for the sainted as will form a perpetual bulwark around their slumbering dust. All men seem conscious of the truthfulness of this assertion; and hence, we find among all a uniform regard for the graves of the departed.

Children are often the most competent teachers, when lessons pertaining to the impulses and instincts of our nature are to be learned. They shall be our instructors here. It was on a bright morning in May, as I had set out on a visit to one of those beautiful cemeteries in the vicinity of Philadelphia, that my attention was arrested by a group of sprightly children. I observed them tripping along the hill-side until they reached a spot where bloomed the violet and hare-bell; and I saw their little hands busily engaged in gathering

bunches of these, and they then approached the entrance of the sacred enclosure where I stood. As soon as they entered, their innocent glee abated, their merry voices subsided into gentle whispers, and they moved about with subdued feelings, inspecting the graves and reading the inscriptions on the tomb-stones. I followed on, until they paused before a little grave, and I read on the slab which covered it, the touching record — “Our Willie.” On this tomb two of the little girls laid their treasure of violets. Why do you strew these flowers on this grave, I asked? They looked at me with an air of surprise, and replied, “Why, sir, our brother Willie sleeps here, and we love him, and often bring him flowers!”

After the others of their company had made similar offerings to beloved ones, they left the place without disturbing any thing, and with apparently happy hearts. Such are the feelings of children, and they exhibit the instincts of nature in relation to the sepulchre. And there is no better method of ascertaining the remains of that which is commendable and lovely in our depraved humanity, than by observing the unreserved and untaught out-flows and motions of the hearts of uncorrupted children. For their minds do not yet labor under the pressure of those false notions, which are the growth of riper years, but which despoil the heart of its early and sweet sensibilities; neither are they yet the subjects of those cares and anxieties which freeze the fountain of the soul’s sympathies. But it is not only in children that we may witness a becoming respect for the graves of the departed, but also in all those of mature years,

whose culture has not been grossly neglected. And if there are those occasionally found who would rudely tread upon the dust of a fellow-mortal, they are such as have outlived the finer and holier feelings of early years. Yet such are seldom met with; and among the multitudes of those who move among the mansions of the dead, there are few whose emotions do not partake of the sanctity of the place. And this veneration for the abodes of the dead is a sentiment not peculiar to an age, or a nation, but is coextensive with time, and wide-spread as the human family. For while there may exist at different periods a difference of sentiment in relation to the same subject, no such diversity has marked the feelings of the race in its respect for the dead. One age may prize the monuments of art and of science, and cherish with intense enthusiasm those trophies of genius which have come down to them from a remote period, while their immediate successors may be as remarkable for the contempt with which they treat those ancient memorials of intellectual triumph. But in whatever else mankind have differed in their several generations concerning the same thing, this feeling of respect for the sepulchre was never impaired, neither is it liable to change. From the remotest antiquity down to the present hour, have men loved and venerated the silent abodes of the dead.

Various causes have doubtless contributed to invest the tomb with a high degree of sanctity. And apart from that instinctive veneration for it, of which all are conscious, the other causes most active and chiefly instrumental in clothing

it with its sacredness, are to be sought in its origin, and the profound respect with which it has from time immemorial been regarded. Its origin dates far back in history;—to such a remote period in the past, that it may be safely assumed to be coeval with death. And if so, is not its origin Divine? It would seem that such an inference might be legitimately drawn from the declaration of God, at the time when He announced to our first parents in Paradise, the penalty of their disobedience. “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” While there is nothing positive or specific in this language, as to the mode in which the human body should be resolved into the dust from which its elements had been taken, it would certainly suggest itself to the mind, that the most befitting way to dispose of the body would be to deposit it in the ground, that it might quietly moulder back to its mother. There is moreover a propriety which could not escape the consideration of the living, in thus removing from their sight the form of a beloved one while it still wears the impress of beauty and life, that the humiliating process of decay to which all must be subjected might be seen only by the eye of Him, whose hand will reconstruct it glorious and immortal. But if such an inference from the sacred text were not allowed, and if we could offer no tangible proof that the spirit of God even suggested such a disposition of the dead, the custom of inhuming has enjoyed the Divine sanction in all ages of the world.

In the most ancient of the Divine records, there are

frequent allusions to the grave as a place of sacred rest. It is represented as a safe and blessed retreat from the miseries of earth, and as a scene of undisturbed tranquillity in contrast with the disquietudes of life. Job speaks of "the house appointed for all the living," and hopefully looks forward to the tomb, as a place where "the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

Abraham uttered the language of nature and religion, when he said to the sons of Heth, "give me possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight," And the offer which the sons of Heth made to Abraham, "in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead," conclusively shows that inhumation was generally practised in those times. But Abraham seemed unwilling that his sainted wife should repose undistinguished among strangers, and therefore insisted on purchasing a lot of ground for this particular purpose. "And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, the same is in the land of Canaan." And this lot which he purchased remained as a family burying-ground; for after Abraham had died, the sacred record informs us that his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. In this entire proceeding of this ancient patriarch, there is a beautiful exhibition of tenderness and regard for the dead. He would not receive the field as a proffered gift, but paid for it; neither

was he willing to accept the offer of a sepulchre, but provided one for her whom he loved. It is manifest from his conduct, that his feelings concerning his departed were the same as the bereaved now experience ; for he neither wished to forget the companion of his bosom, nor have her buried where her grave might be exposed to the intrusion of strangers. He cherished those sentiments of regard for the sainted dead of which all the good are conscious, and of the existence of which they give pleasing evidence in their care to beautify the tombs of their departed.

Jacob, in the closing scenes of his life, also gives us a touching exhibition of the yearnings of his being for the dust of his kindred. Although he had experienced many distinguished mercies in the land of Egypt, and the honorable position of his son Joseph would have secured for him a royal intombment in that country, yet did he earnestly desire that his body might repose with his friends, and his dust mingle with theirs. “And he charged them” (his sons) “and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people ; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite : in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah ; which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife, and there I buried Leah.” And this dying request was religiously observed ; for we are informed that Joseph with the royal sanction, ordered the most imposing funeral obse-

quies for his father. A large multitude, composed of Hebrews and Egyptians, accompanied the remains to Canaan, where they buried Jacob amid great lamentation and mourning. And the same intense desire to repose with his fathers in that hallowed spot manifested itself in Joseph during his last moments. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

That the people of God attached a very high degree of sacredness to the sepulchre, may also be gathered from the importance which they ascribed to an honorable burial. To be deprived of this they viewed as one of the most distressing calamities that could befall them. There is an affecting instance of this kind mentioned in II. Sam. xxi. 9-14. The sons of Rizpah had been delivered to the Gibeonites, who slew them, and exposed their bodies. The mother of these unfortunate persons "took sackcloth, and spread it upon a rock from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." And when it was told to David, he ordered their remains to be gathered up and decently interred. In this touching incident we see the regard which a mother had for the bodies of her sons. And there is not that mother living, if she be worthy of that holy name, who would not, under

like circumstances, sit down and watch the remains of those whom she loved until relieved from her office by death. And a similar abhorrence of being exposed to insult, or devoured by the fowls of heaven, or the beasts of the field, is expressed by Solomon, when he says, "If a man live many years and be not filled with good, and also have no burial, I say that an untimely birth is better than he." In the seventy-ninth Psalm, the treatment of the dead on the part of the heathen is thus deplored. "The dead bodies of thy saints have they given to be meat unto the fowls of heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them." A like feeling prevailed among other nations on this subject. The Egyptians carefully embalmed their friends, and, after suitable preparations for interment, they used the precaution to place them where they might remain undisturbed. And such care marked their disposition of the dead, that but for the restless and inquisitive antiquarian, they would have slumbered on unmolested in their silent mansions until the dawn of the resurrection morn. And it is a well-established fact, that all nations deplore the fate of those to whom the right of sepulture is denied. A distinguished writer on the Antiquities of Egypt says, that among that ancient people there was a regularly organized court, before which the character of the deceased person was examined prior to his burial. If he had not lived in accordance with established rules burial was denied, and he was cast into a pool. If, however, the constituted authorities

pronounced a favourable judgment upon his character, an honorable disposition of his body was ordered. And those cases where interment was not allowed produced the most painful distress among survivors! And this instinctive dread of being left without burial is common to all. With what imploring looks does the emigrant mother beg of the captain of the vessel, that he might spare her child's body until they touch at some friendly shore where it may be committed to the earth!

Another proof of the sacredness of the sepulchre may be drawn from the universal regard with which it is cherished. Wherever we meet with allusions to the grave, whether in sacred or profane history, there is invariably associated with it a high degree of sanctity. And not only is it manifest in the records of nations that they regarded the tomb as something inviolable, but they have also shown a uniform respect for the sepulchre by the care which they bestow upon it. A traveller, in speaking of Eastern sepulchres, remarks: "If we except a few persons who are buried within the precincts of some sanctuary, the rest are carried out at a small distance from their cities and villages, where a great extent of ground is allotted for that purpose. Each family has a particular portion of it walled in like a garden, where the bones of their ancestors have remained undisturbed for many generations; for in these enclosures the graves are all distinct and separate, having each of them a stone placed upright, both at the head and feet, inscribed with the name of the person who lies there interred; whilst the intermediate

space is either planted with flowers, or paved all over with tiles." Mr. Buckingham, another traveller, says, "Not far from the spot where we halted to enjoy this enchanting view, was an extensive cemetery, at which we noticed the custom so prevalent among Eastern nations, of visiting the tombs of their deceased friends. These were formed with great care, and finished with extraordinary neatness; and at the foot of each grave was enclosed a small earthen vessel, in which was planted a sprig of myrtle, regularly watered every day by the mourning friend who visited it. Throughout the whole of this extensive place of burial we did not observe a single grave to which this token of respect and sorrow was not attached; and scattered among the tombs, in different quarters of the cemetery, we saw from twenty to thirty females, sitting near the honored remains of some recently lost and deeply-regretted relative or friend, and either watering the myrtle plants, or strewing flowers over the green turf that closed upon their heads."

In the book of Nehemiah, there is an interesting account of an interview which took place between that Jew and Artaxerxes, which illustrates the regard these representatives of two nations exhibited for the sacredness of the grave. Nehemiah was the son of one of the captives in Babylon, and although born and reared in that country, he cherished that love for the Holy Land which is common to every Jew. Doubtless all that was glowing in the history of God's chosen people was communicated to him in childhood, and it is therefore not singular that his heart should burn with patriotic

love. Having heard from some who had come from Palestine, of the privations and sufferings to which those were subjected, who had gone there to rebuild Jerusalem, and also, of the desecration of the tombs of the Prophets and Kings of Judah, he gave himself to earnest prayer, and besought God to make him instrumental in the deliverance of his brethren, and in the restoration of the Holy Land. His appearance before the king is best described in his own pathetic narrative. "And it came to pass in the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence: wherefore the king said unto me, why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart! Then I was very sore afraid, and said let the king live forever; why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my father's sepulchres, lieth waste?" There could not be a more delicate, yet profound expression of his reverence for the graves of his fathers. He makes no mention of the desolations of the city, only in so far as they related to the condition of the sepulchres of his kindred. He does not picture the departed glory of Jerusalem, he says nothing of her broken-down walls, her fallen palaces, her temple in ruins, only so far as these have affected those sacred enclosures which contained the dust of her illustrious dead. There was no eye to watch, no hand to adorn, and no arm to defend the tombs of the Prophets. There is not an incident in the history of this distinguished man, which sheds a brighter

glow over his eventful life. His noble spirit had borne up under the varied and weighty calamities which had cast their dark shadows over the Holy Land, or emptied their woes upon the chosen nation. He had become reconciled to all the humiliations incident to his own condition, and endured his servitude with cheerfulness; but the intelligence of these profaned sepulchres brought such a settled sorrow upon his heart, that, even to the eye of a stranger, it was painfully mirrored upon his countenance, and awakened the solicitude of the Persian monarch.

Before we conclude our examination of this subject, it may be important to consult the views and practices of the primitive Christians in relation to the departed and the places of their repose. Christianity in its influence does not suppress, but rather exalt and ennoble the feelings of human nature. Its grand aim is to build up, not to destroy; to correct, to chasten, and to purify the tendencies of our nature, and not to make us stoically indifferent when the tender relations of life are sundered by death. "From the first," says Neander, "Christianity condemned the wild, and at the same time hypocritical expressions of grief with which the funeral procession was accompanied; those wailings of women who had been hired for the occasion: yet it required no stoic resignation and apathy, but mitigated and refined the anguish of sorrow by the spirit of faith and hope, and of child-like resignation to that eternal love, which takes, in order to restore what it has taken under a more glorious form; which separates for the moment, in order to re-unite

the separated in a glorified state through eternity." "We ought not to mourn," says Cyprian, "for those who are delivered from the world by the call of the Lord, since we know they are not lost, but sent before us." "They live with God!" "There await us a multitude of those whom we love, fathers, mothers, brothers, and children, who have secured already their own salvation, and are concerned only for ours." But while they were thus comforted by the hopes and promises of the gospel, these very consolations gave origin to the custom, which required that the memory of departed friends should be celebrated by their relations, on the anniversary of their death, in a manner conformable to the spirit and hope of religion. On these festival occasions the Lord's Supper was administered, and was intended to convey the idea "of their inseparable fellowship with those who had died in the Lord." For the same reason did they deposit gifts on the altar in the name of their departed, because they were still "living members of the church." Besides these more private or family celebrations of the memory of those who had been called to the church triumphant, whole communities joined in commemorating the death of martyrs. "The anniversary of the death of such individuals was looked upon as their birth-day to a nobler existence." "On each returning anniversary of their birth-day (in the sense which has been explained), the people gathered around their graves, where the story was rehearsed of their confession and sufferings, and the communion was celebrated in the consciousness of a continued fellowship with them, now that they were

united with him for whom, by their sufferings they had witnessed a good confession." This custom among the early Christians was not only innocent and beautiful, but eminently fitted to promote spiritual edification, to strengthen their faith, and to inspire the living with fortitude to live, to suffer, and to die for Christ. That it was afterwards perverted and made to minister to superstition cannot be denied; but whatever subsequent abuses may have grown out of it, these could not vitiate the original excellence and beauty of the principle.

The pious solicitude manifested in the times of persecution, by the followers of the Redeemer, to rescue the mutilated remains of their martyred brethren from the contumely and insults of the Pagans, and the care with which they attended to the interment of such fragments of their bodies as they could obtain, attest the respect which they cherished for the dead, and their veneration for the rights of sepulture. They regarded the body of the Christian as the sanctified organ of the soul, and were therefore not only solicitous to provide for it a place of repose, but sacredly cherished the grave, from which it was one day to arise in its glorified form.

In the History of the Church, by Eusebius, lib. iv. ch. 15, there is recorded a letter from the church of Smyrna, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, their bishop, in which they reply to the heathens, who refused to give up the remains of the martyr "lest the Christians should abandon the *crucified* and begin to worship *him*." The church writes — "our envious and malignant adversary, that wicked enemy

of all the righteous, seeing the lustre of his martyrdom, had provided that not even his corpse could be obtained by us, though many of us eagerly wished it, so as to have communion with the sacred body. It was suggested that we would desert our crucified master, and begin to worship Polycarp. Foolish men! They know not, that we can neither forsake that Christ who has suffered for the salvation of all men, nor worship another. Him we adore as the Son of God; but the martyrs we *love* as they deserved for their unconquerable love to their king and master, and because we also wish to become their companions and disciples. The centurion therefore caused the body to be burned; we then gathered his bones, more precious than pearls and more tried than gold, and buried them. In this place, God willing, we will meet in joy and gladness and celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom, in remembrance of the departed champion, and for the purpose of exercising and arming those whom the conflict is still waiting." Here then we have the reason why they manifested such a commendable anxiety to possess the bodies of those who fell victims to the spirit of persecution: it was, that they might commune with each other and with the departed, around their holy sepulchres.

But they also exhibited their regard for the dead and their reverence for the grave, by erecting suitable memorials in honor of those whom they loved. They constructed monuments of the most costly and durable materials, and inscribed upon these the virtues of the deceased. Their cemeteries were prepared with great care, and sacredly guarded against profane intrusions.

“The Christians called their burial-places Κοιμητήρια, dormitories, because death, in the light of the Gospel, is a sleep. These dormitories, as we here see, were frequented by the Christians, as peculiarly calculated to cherish religious sentiments, particularly if these places had been the depositories of martyred confessors. It was here, too, where, in the firm faith that death is but a sleep, they could hold a kind of communion with departed virtue, and find their own strengthened by it. Well may Christianity be pronounced the only true philosophy, when she arrays our greatest terrors in such a light.”—Euseb. lib. vii., chap. xiii.

Many of these were constructed underneath the surface of the earth; and, no doubt, with a view to afford the persecuted disciples of our Lord a safe retreat, where they might worship Him unmolested. In after years of quiet and victory over their enemies, they sometimes erected churches over the graves of distinguished saints.

We have, therefore, the ample and conclusive testimony of sacred and profane history to sustain the sacredness of the sepulchre. And shattered and vitiated as our humanity is, it still claims as one of its jewels reverence for the tombs of our departed. And although some may raise the cry of superstition and man-worship, where nothing more is intended than merited respect, we regard the feeling which invests the abodes of the dead with sanctity, as one of exceeding beauty and worth. The absence of such a sentiment in man must greatly detract from his character, and is almost demonstrative proof that he is a stranger to those

heavenly inspirations with which the religion of Jesus peoples the human heart. It is not possible that any exalted and noble feelings should live where there is no respect for the grave. Even those who make no pretensions to piety, and are therefore destitute of those finer sensibilities which are the offspring of high moral culture, linger fondly and mournfully around some ancient ruins, and utter most pathetic and deeply-moving sentiments. And if the ashes of the cities of antiquity can kindle such sublime emotions in the bosom of man, should not the mouldering dust of the human form, once divine, glow under our contemplations with the fires of immortality? Aye, we do feel, and we could not wish to feel otherwise, that the enclosures where the departed repose are holy ground. The instincts of nature, and the religion of Jesus, who sanctified the sepulchre with his own immaculate body, bid us cherish the graves of the sainted as holy shrines. Venerable mansions of our departed! we will place some mark of affection upon you. And if we can bring no other offering, we will plant a flower or shrub, and water it with our tears, that some emblem of life and immortality may remind the passer-by of the glory of that day when the hand of the great Redeemer shall rebuild these fallen temples of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER THIRD.

VISITS TO THE SEPULCHRES OF OUR DEPARTED.

“Oft let me range the gloomy aisles along,
Sad luxury! to vulgar minds unknown,
Along the tombs where speaking marbles show
What worthies form the hallow'd mould below;
Proud names, who once the reins of empire held,
In arms who triumph'd, or in arts excell'd;
Chiefs grac'd with scars, and prodigal of blood,
Stern patriots who for sacred freedom stood;
Just men by whom impartial laws were given,
And saints who taught and led the way to heaven.”

VISITS to the places where our departed repose are prompted by the instincts of humanity, and the suggestions of love. They have been withdrawn from those circles which their presence made glad. Their voice mingles no more in the hymn of praise which rises around the family altar; they are not of the number who meet around the cheerful hearth; and in their retirement they claim from us an occasional visit to their graves. The remotest period in my history to which memory points, is when about five years of age. I was alone on the green lawn that stretches out before the home of my childhood, calling my sainted mother, and wondering why she did not answer my call, and hasten

to my side. And were it permitted, would she not have withdrawn herself from her angel companions, and winged her flight to the presence of her lonely child? Yea, I know not but that she was present with me, and her sweet spirit may have held my thoughts in communion with her. It is a beautiful and consoling thought, and one certainly not in conflict with, but rather encouraged by, the teachings of inspiration, that we have our guardian angels to accompany us on our pilgrimage through life; to minister to us in a way we know not; yet defending us from the assaults of the tempter, and bearing us safely through the dangers which encompass the road in which we travel. God promised to Israel that, His angel should guide and guard them through all their wanderings. "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those who fear him." "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?" And by whom, among the armies of those spirits around Jehovah's throne, would the office to guide and guard us be more fondly accepted and more faithfully executed, than by those who are removed from us, but who still love us?

The doctrine concerning guardian angels, though perhaps not as clearly revealed as many others, yet has its foundation in that universality of belief, which clothes any dogma with

something of a divine sanction. It may be regarded as belonging to that class of truths, which enter into all creeds, because they have never been questioned, but always received the cheerful assent of the hearts and minds of all men. The Jews firmly believed that it was the prerogative of each one to be accompanied by an angel, whose office was to shield them from those destructive influences, physical and moral, by which they were surrounded. And the belief in guardian angels is equally general among Christians. And if the idea were even imaginary, and possessed nothing real in itself, it would still be well to cherish the belief for the sake of the influence which this persuasion exerts upon the mind. For by a law of our nature, as powerful as it is sure in its operations, man becomes gradually identified with the feelings and sentiments of his companions, until he is altogether assimilated to their character. If we are continually associated with persons whose minds are cultivated, and whose characters are adorned with lofty virtues; we will perhaps imperceptibly, yet steadily, rise to that intellectual and moral elevation which they occupy, and ultimately be conscious of a perfect harmony of sentiment, of taste and disposition with those who have attracted and moulded our spirits into the image of their own. And in view of those results which the law of intercourse invariably produces, the persuasion of attendant spirits will necessarily exert an elevating and purifying influence upon us. Our intellectual and moral exercises will partake of that dignity and sanctity which are peculiar to those of angelic beings. And if to this we add,

the consideration that, among those invisible ministers commissioned to guard us, there is one whom we fondly cherish; a father, a mother, a companion, or brother, or sister, or child, moving with us through this busy and bustling world; hovering about our path by sea or by land, by night and by day, in public and in private, a spectator of all our actions, and a witness of all our ways; will not this conviction be a sleepless prompter to virtue, and a constant monitor to warn us against vice? Will not the conscious presence of our sainted one bind in strong fetters our evil propensities, and thus save us from sin? Will not the *felt* nearness of some such beloved spirit animate us in every good work, and make us strong in every conflict? Will it not give us fortitude in trials, patience in suffering, hope amid dark calamities, lift our aspirations to heaven, and bear our whole spiritual being, as on eagle wings, onward to the bosom of God? O, if we cherish a realizing sense of the presence of these holy ones, we cannot willingly commit sin! We cannot tear from our hearts and trample in the dust those lessons of instruction, which their example in life and their hope in death engraved upon our minds.

But, it may be asked, what bearing have these considerations upon the subject which constitutes the basis of this chapter? and in reply to this question, I need only remark, that if we believe our departed to be occupied in unremitted watchings and ministrations for our good, would not this conviction place us under solemn obligations to manifest our gratitude and love for them, by frequent visits to those sacred

retreats where their bodies slumber? And if the spirits of our sainted are cognizant of our actions, and if any earthly transaction can heighten those raptures that are ever flowing through the channels of their glorified being, it might be presumed that such visits to their graves would have this effect. For the existence of a pious remembrance of the departed, amid the mutations and excitements of earth, where wave after wave sweeps violently across the mind, and obliterates or displaces by new ones, impressions which former events had made, would afford them the pleasing indication that its possessor is not lost in the whirl of earthly pursuits, and utterly forgetful of heaven and those who have gone there. But apart from all considerations of pleasure which it might afford to the sainted, there are many substantial reasons which might be urged upon the living to induce them frequently to visit the city of the dead.

Such visits are appropriate and beautiful. They are suggested by the tenderest feelings of our nature, and sanctioned by the examples of the great and good. Every true but wounded heart echoes to its partners in sorrow the invitation,

“Come unto the church-yard near,
Where the gentle whispering breeze
Softly rustleth through the trees;
Where the moonbeam pure and white,
Falls in floods of cloudless light,
Bathing many a turfy heap
Where the lowlier slumberers sleep;
And the graceful willow waves,
Banner-like, o'er nameless graves :

Here hath prayer arisen like dew,—
Here the earth is holy, too ;
Lightly press each grassy mound ;
Surely this is hallowed ground.”

There is something exceedingly attractive in the place, which constrains the visitor to linger long and pleasantly about it.

But it is by these visitations to their tombs that we show becoming respect to departed friends. They cannot come to us, but we may go and linger around their ashes. And it is surely a very appropriate way in which we may express our regard for them. And to this are we also strongly inclined by that undying affection which will forever bind us in holy union with kindred spirits. Such visits are, therefore, not to be regarded as dictated by an idle custom, nor the offspring of an affected sorrow ; for in this we act from a common impulse, the force of which all must acknowledge who have tasted the cup of bereavement. And not only are Christians conscious of this inward yearning for the dust of beloved ones, but those also who are destitute of the Christian's hope find themselves irresistibly drawn to those places where their kindred repose. Account for it as we may, the voice of Nature is stern and peremptory in its demands in this respect ; so that if it cannot move the body, it will command the soul on such visits. It is one of those mysteries the force of which we feel, but the nature of which we cannot fully explain. Our feelings, after a few changes in life, will become more or less localized. And we discover that there are some places and some objects which they

will seek, as the volatilized steel seeks the magnet, and around which they will as firmly cluster. And such localities and such objects are enshrined in our memories, because consecrated by our affections and baptized with our tears. Thus are our hearts bound by a viewless chain to the dust of dear departed ones; and if, perchance, the pressure of some worldly duty, or the attraction of some social interest divert the thoughts and cause the heart for a moment to forget its treasure, it will turn to it again as truly as the needle turns to the pole, after those disturbing influences are withdrawn. Our nature yearns towards the sepulchres of our departed, as though a part of our own being were laid there. If, therefore, we would not do violence to the laws of our own being, and war against one of the holiest impulses of our nature, we cannot be wanting in those offices which it is still in the power of the living to render to the dead. Go, then, thou bereaved one, as often as circumstances will permit, to that little grass-grown mound, or to that larger grave—go, visit the hallowed spot consecrated by the ashes of thy kindred. It will amply compensate you for your trouble; for it will feed the flame of that pure love which unites you to that far-off one who made your past life beautiful with blessing, and who may fill your future with large and glorious good.

But the influence which such visits exert upon the mind and heart may also be urged as a motive for occasionally repairing to the silent abodes of the dead. Cyprian, in speaking of the early Christians, says, “that in seasons of

persecution they were accustomed to resort to the sepulchres of their martyred brethren for prayer and meditation; and that they returned from these more resolute and courageous, and even willing to endure the most violent death for the cause of their Master." And the influence which is exerted upon the mind by the graves of the pious dead is always beneficial. These mansions are eminently suggestive; and there is much about the entire scene of a grave-yard which is fitted to detach us from earth, and bind us to heaven. It is a place where the thoughtful may gather gems for their crown of glory.

“Through these branched walks will contemplation wind,
 And grave wise Nature’s teachings on his mind;
 As the white grave-stones glimmer to his eye,
 A solemn voice will thrill him, ‘Thou must die!’
 When Autumn’s tints are glittering in the air,
 That voice will whisper to his soul, ‘Prepare!’
 When Winter’s snows are spread o’er hill and dell,
 ‘O, this is death!’ that solemn voice will swell;
 But when with Spring streams leap and blossoms wave,
 ‘Hope, Christian, hope,’ ’twill say, ‘there’s life beyond the
 grave!’”

Aye, these inclosures will give birth to thoughts whose mighty sweep will embrace all that is real and noble in time, and all that is great and glowing in eternity.

Is it the tomb of an honored parent that we visit; one who gave us existence and cherished us in our feeble infancy? O, what memories of holy love, of pious instructions, of affectionate endearments, come thronging round the soul, like bright spirits! The records of memory will glow as if newly

written in letters of light. Is it the grave of a beloved mother where we stand? My mother! O, what a world of thought, what an ocean of bliss there is in this holy word! Yes, here sleeps my mother. She who forgot the anguish of her soul in her joy that I was born. She whose eyes were held waking over my infancy, when all others slumbered but the eye above. She whose love rendered her perceptions so keen and far-sighted, that she perceived and guarded me against dangers while they were yet distant. She who quieted my feeble cries on her gentle bosom. She who first bent over me in devout supplications, and taught me the music of Jesus' name. She whose last words were words of blessing, and whose spirit, as it rose from that couch of suffering to eternal mansions, shook from its wings the incense of prayer upon my head. Blessed holy one, who lived in her child. Rejoiced when I was happy; was in anguish when I was pained. The first to know and to relieve my sorrows. The first to be interested in my childish prattle, and to guide my tottering footsteps. Dear departed one! shall I not here recall thy watchful care and thy unwearied love, and thank the Good Being who gave me such a treasure in thee? Such thoughts and feelings are fitting at such a place where a mother sleeps, and becoming those who can appreciate a mother's affection. For who that has enjoyed her care and received her instruction may not breathe out his soul in sentiments such as shine in the poem of Cowper, on the receipt of his mother's portrait? Who would not join a living author, in his tribute to maternal worth?—

"My Mother! manhood's anxious brow
 And sterner cares have long been mine;
 Yet turn I to thee fondly now,
 As when upon thy bosom's shrine
 My infant griefs were gently hush'd to rest,
 And thy low-whisper'd prayers my slumber blest.
 I've por'd o'er many a yellow page
 Of ancient wisdom, and have won,
 Perchance, a scholar's name — but sage
 Or bard have never taught thy son
 Lessons so dear, so fraught with holy truth,
 As those his mother's faith shed on his youth."

But perhaps some of my readers may have had the misfortune, like the writer of these pages, to lose their mother before they could know her or appreciate her worth. And O, what reflections are those of which we are conscious at her tomb! If we could but recall her image, or the accents of her voice, or the thrilling touch of a mother's caresses! Alas! all this is denied to some, and there is nothing left to tell them how she looked; for there were few pencils then employed to transfer the image of the living upon the canvass, and the sunbeam had not then learned to engrave likenesses upon the polished plate. Did I say there was nothing left to assist the imagination in the creation of her image? O, yes, every virtue which brightens our character was warmed into life by her love. For, although the seeds of those virtues which adorn our characters are divine, because they came from heaven, yet were they planted by a mother's hand and watered by a mother's tears; and they have matured in our lives, because the eye of a covenant-keeping God rested upon her prayers as chronicled in His book. O,

my beloved, my sainted mother! Though I never looked upon thy face to know thee; though not conscious at the time that it was the music of thy throbbing heart that lulled me into peaceful slumbers; though unknown to the sense of sight, my spirit knows thee, and no human heart has ever thrilled with a holier love than mine for thee! Yet again shall I be folded in thine embrace; for thy tomb reminds me that I am mortal, and thy prayers have prevailed with God, for thy son is on his pilgrimage to Zion; and, when weary and wayworn on my journey, the thought that I shall know thee in heaven as my mother animates me with new strength, and I press onwards to thy blessed home on high.

And thus, also, may we linger with profit around the grave which contains the ashes of an honored father. For, "he being dead yet speaketh." Although death has silenced his tongue, and hushed the pulsations of that noble heart which beat in unison with the will of heaven, he still lives! He lives in that legacy of good principles, and in the force of that unsullied example, which he bequeathed to his family. No tongue of malice can taunt us with any gross imperfections in his life; for his character was transmitted to his posterity untarnished and without a flaw, and will forever sparkle as a brilliant gem in the crown of his children's glory. He aimed to impress upon the hearts of his offspring lessons of virtue, and to write in their minds laws of purity and love. It was his purpose to send them out into the world as transcripts of his own character, jeweled with many and lofty virtues. Such a father's principles are immortal, and will, by their

mysterious but potent influence, continue to mould society for generations to come. Enshrined in the affections of those to whom he gave existence, these principles will be incorporated in *their* lives and perpetuated by their children, and will form a part of that moral power which is to regenerate mankind and illumine the world until time and eternity blend. The good never die! Their names are linked with virtue, and virtue is imperishable! As the vessel which glides through the ocean raises waves that will break upon the farthest shore, so the passage of a good man through this world will wake influences which will live through all time, and, passing on into the spirit land, will vibrate in the raptures of the redeemed while the music of eternity lasts. All that we have loved in a father we will recall at his grave, and lessons long forgotten will rise up in all their beauty and potency, to command our souls and to control our lives. Every visitation to his tomb will strengthen the purpose, and furnish fresh incentives, to walk in the footsteps of him whose "hoary head was a crown of glory, because it was found in the way of righteousness."

But it may be a companion to whom we are called to pay these sad offices! A husband and father cut down in the midst of life, at a period when it appeared most important that he should live; a youthful and interesting family was budding around him; he had overcome those incipient struggles which are incident to every vocation in life, and had reached that degree of prosperity which enabled him to devote much of his time to the improvement of his children.

But while the sky was bright, and sunshine dwelt upon that circle of devoted hearts, suddenly did the bolt of the destroyer fall and blight that Eden. The stay and support of dependent ones is shattered—"the strong staff and the beautiful rod is broken." And now, from that home which death has desolated, there issues a wail of wo! The cries of widowed love and helpless orphanage come up to our ears—"Have pity upon us, have pity upon us, O, our friends; for the hand of the Lord hath touched us." And yet is it well for that inconsolable widow, whose wounds are kept fresh and bleeding by the innocent inquiries of her little ones concerning their beloved father, to come forth from her secret weepings and her home of sadness, and repair to the grave which holds her heart's treasure. For there may she be reminded how the "Rod of Jesse was once bruised and laid in the sepulchre," where it budded and blossomed, and so became a staff, able to support those who trust to it for comfort. And while her tears water the springing grass upon the new grave she hears words of hope and consolation descending from the throne of heaven—"Leave thy fatherless children with me; I will preserve them; and let thy widows trust in me, saith the Lord." For, "He is a father unto the fatherless and a husband unto the widow." And as she looks out upon the landscape and up to the out-spread heavens, and sees that the Divine protection encircles and sustains all things, from the ponderous world to the little atom, and from the tall archangel to that worm which performs its evolutions in the dust at her feet, her faith gathers strength, and light springs

up in her darkness, and, with a confiding spirit, she commits herself and her children to the guardianship of that Almighty being, in the strength of whose arm and in the love of whose heart none have ever yet trusted in vain.

Or is it the grave of a devoted wife and faithful mother that a surviving partner is to visit? What can be more consoling, than occasionally to linger around the hallowed scene where the cherished one reposes? He there feels a nearness to her which he cannot realize any where else; and he experiences a mournful pleasure while strewing her tomb with fragrant and frail memorials of her beauty and love. And is not that the most appropriate place to rehearse her virtues in the presence of his children, and there to admonish them to practise those lessons with which she stored their minds? The loss of a cherished wife and beloved mother occasions a deep and wide-spread disaster. "In comparison with the loss of a wife all other earthly bereavements are trifling. The wife! she who fills so large a space in the domestic heaven — she who is so busied — so unwearyed in laboring for the precious ones around her — bitter, bitter is the tear that falls on her cold clay. You think of her now, as all gentleness, all beauty and purity. The dear head that laid upon your bosom rests in the still darkness upon a pillow of clay! The hands that have administered so untiringly are folded, white and cold, beneath the gloomy portals! The heart whose every beat measured an eternity of love lies under your feet! The flowers she bent over with smiles bend now above her with tears, shaking the

dew from their petals, that the verdure around her may be kept green and beautiful." And O, how will those hours of past endearments rise radiant with their memories, and the images of her beauty, her gentleness, and love, start up like troops of angels from her sepulchre! And in recounting the excellencies which were embodied in the character of such a loved one, the sainted seems present, and we almost fancy that she participates in our sadness.

And if it be a child that we deplore, then have we companions in our sorrow, and visits to its grave will afford us occasions for mutual improvement. And here we touch a chord which sends its vibrations through many hearts, for who has not lost a child? What flock has not yielded up one, and that perhaps the first-born lamb, to the fold of the good Shepherd? There are few families where there is not one chair vacant, one link in the family chain broken; and what can be more soothing to anguished hearts than visits to their little graves?—perhaps it is the first one of the family who has gone to the “house appointed for all the living;” so that a voice seems to call from its ashes not to forget it in its loneliness. And what an array of little incidents connected with their brief existence rise up before the mind while we stand by that little mound. We recall not only all that was pleasant in their life, but all that we experienced in that sad hour when their wasted arms encircled our neck for the last time, and all that we felt when we saw the coffin descending into the deep grave. Around that sacred spot do our affections still linger. Ah! that little grave, under

the shadow of that tree where he had often played — the place he loved — there we laid him in our sorrow. But we left him not to slumber alone, for we laid our hearts with him in the tomb. We had often stood by other little open graves, and, as we committed “dust to dust” in the hope of the resurrection, we thought happy lambs are these, so early folded, and wondered why their peaceful death and happy departure to heaven should cause distress. We marvelled that tears should flow for those who had fled from the sorrows of earth to the bosom of God. But we understood not those tears — we knew not the anguish which wrung parental hearts, and expressed itself in groans that shook the frame — until we laid the snowy form of our own beautiful and gentle boy in the grave. O, then, as “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,” was committed to the silent mansion, we knew and felt it all; yes, all; and we would have deemed it a privilege to lie down with him, that our dust might have commingled with his. Many fond hopes do parents form concerning their offspring; for they are buds of promise, which they would see unfold in all their loveliness. And so had we formed expectations of our boy; we thought him too beautiful to die: but God had a place for him in his cherub band, and so He sent a messenger to call him home. Long and earnest were our vigils and prayers around his couch. Anxious to retain him “we hoped against hope;” but in the midnight hour his spirit went up on the wings of a storm, that seemed to wail without in sympathy with that tempest of sorrow which swept our souls *that* night.

But it is time to return from this circle of reflections, which I suffered to enlarge that utterance might be given to all hearts, over whatever loved one they might mourn, from the hoary-headed sire to the little child. I would, however, yet observe, that visits to the tombs of the departed should be encouraged, forasmuch as the blessings are many and valuable which the bereaved and sorrowful may gather there. The sepulchre of a friend will bring with great urgency before the mind subjects which cannot be contemplated without benefit to the soul. For while those cherished places are fruitful in their suggestions of matter for profitable meditation and prayer, they clothe these subjects with an interest and beauty which they possess nowhere else. They afford us just views of life, of death, and immortality, and therefore have a tendency to keep the heart free from the bondage of this world, and the thoughts associated with the realities of a coming eternity. These tombs form connecting links between the mortal and the immortal; they are scenes where the interests of the earthly and the heavenly, the things of time and eternity, commingle, and where the inhabitants of glory seem to meet earth's pilgrims, to inspire them with perseverance in their upward toil to a crown of life. But perhaps you say, I have the will to obey these suggestions here offered, for they are consonant with the inclinations and promptings of my nature, but this disposition is not coupled with the needed ability; Providence has ordained that my beloved should sleep at a distance from my abode! Far beyond the ocean did death meet them, and they now repose

among strangers. In that distant land where, it was thought, a mild and equable climate would successfully contend with disease and re-establish a shattered constitution, they died far from home and friends! Or, in that sunny isle whither they fled with a feeble hope of restoration did disease hurry them from earth! Or, on their home-bound voyage they met death and found a watery grave. Be it even so; I too am far removed from the sepulchres of my departed, and it is but seldom that I may drop a tear upon their ashes. But a merciful Providence has furnished us with the necessary ability to carry us in our meditations beyond the ocean, or to any spot within the circle of our globe, wherever our beloved sank into the lap of earth. And if the privilege of visiting in person those consecrated places be denied us, let us give wings to our spirits, that we may be carried to the scene of their repose! Let us go in the morning when the new day is ushered in on its bright wings, and while our minds are fresh and pure from the noisome cares of the world! In the morning, when the spring-flowers scent the air with their sweetness, and the dew-drops, like showers of diamonds, sparkle in the sunbeam, and remind us of the glory of those "who shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever!" And let the evening hour woo our meditations to the far-off grave, when the glorious orb of day is sinking into his bed of gorgeous and golden-tinged clouds in the western sky, and the stillness of the evening hour reminds us of their peaceful passage, in the light of a joyful hope, from this scene of turmoil

into the quiet and beautiful home of the blest! At some such hour take your position in thought by the graves of your cherished ones, and, wherever that spot may be, we will stand beside you, and together we will interrogate the sepulchre for such lessons as it may be able to impart; for it may be that, as it has caused us sorrow, it may also give us joy! and as it has filled our eyes with weeping, it may fill our hearts with peace; for the same soil which produces the thorn that wounds us also nourishes the flower whose fragrance causes us to forget the pain. For, behold! the sepulchre is no longer that darkly-terrible and loathsome receptacle since the hand of the great Redeemer has scattered in its mould the seeds of immortality: for he “who has brought life and immortality to light” has been down in its chambers and illumined its darkness with His glory! He has sanctified the shrines of the dead, and thus constituted the grave a peaceful retreat, and the safe abode of those who fall asleep in Jesus, where they shall slumber on until waked to behold the raptures and glories of **ETERNAL LIFE.**

CHAPTER FOURTH.

LESSONS WHICH THE SEPULCHRE IMPARTS.

THE lessons which the sepulchre is fitted to teach are various, instructive, soothing, and hopeful. They impressively set forth the momentous interests which cluster around life, death, and eternity. He is indeed a dull pupil who does not improve under the instructions of such a master. For his lessons are connected with all our hopes, enter into all our pleasures, and shed a new and solemn aspect over all conditions, over all stations, and over all the phases of our present existence. They are adapted to all capacities; those necessary and useful are so simple that the comprehension of a child masters them—and yet pregnant with the profoundest mysteries that have ever baffled the laboring intellect of the ripe philosopher. They are fitted to make all learners better and wiser. For these instructions kindle hope in the bosoms of the good calculated to incite to the attainment of greater moral excellence, and cast such dark and deep shadows over the profligate soul as should cause it to labor for entrance into the light of God's favor. So humbling in their influence as to make all ambitious aspirings kiss the dust; so sublime in their tendency as to exalt the thoughts and expectations above the stars. August teacher of the nations! We venture into thy presence! We pause in thy shadow!

We bow at thy awful shrine to hear thy utterances! Thou art a universal teacher, declaring the same truths in all climes, in all ages, and in all the tongues of earth. Thou art a faithful instructor, neither awed by the pomp of kings nor the power of tyrants, nor bribed by gold; thou declarest the same humiliating truths to the loftiest as to the lowliest, to the wise and to the ignorant. Thou art an aged and venerable teacher! Six thousand years have left their wrinkles upon thy brow, and the hoar of sixty centuries is upon thy locks. The progenitor of our race was thy first pupil; the Patriarchs were thy disciples. The wild and wandering hordes of the desert, and the civilized dwellers in ancient cities, the Persians and Medes, the Egyptians and Jews, the Grecians and the Romans, were all learners in thy school. Thou hast known every nation in its varied fortunes and in its final history; for one after another was conducted into thy mansions. Thou art acquainted with all men, from the exiled lord of Eden to the one who is this moment consigned to thy keeping; for all have become thy guests and subjects of thy empire. Awful sage! we approach thee with deep solemnity, but without fear; for the Man of Calvary has illumined thy stern countenance with the light of His triumph over thy domain—we come, as docile scholars, to hear from thy lips the lessons which thou art ready to impart. Thou dost speak to the thoughtful of the value of our present existence, and its outflows and bearings upon immortality; but especially dost thou teach us, First:—THE END OF ALL THE LIVING. The inevitable doom of dissolution is upon us, and

all of us shall lie down in the sepulchre to slumber the sleep of death.

“ Our lives are rivers gliding free
To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
The silent grave!
Thither all earthly pomp and boast
Roll to be swallowed up and lost,
In one dark wave !”

It is manifest to all who are given to observation, that the Divine Being has been particularly solicitous to impress upon the minds of all his rational creatures the fact that they must die. And to this end he has so abundantly provided the sources of that knowledge which relates to our present life and its issues, that none can be ignorant of the last great change which awaits us all. The Lord knew full well that man would be liable to forget, not only that he would have to meet death, but also that, in the multitude of objects which challenge his attention and press upon his consideration, he was likely to lose sight of the importance of constant preparation for this event. That there is such a tendency in all, none will presume to question. And, besides the probability of having our thoughts exclusively occupied with things seen and temporal, there is, also, an unwillingness on the part of many to have their enjoyments disturbed, their pleasures embittered, and their business trammelled by meditations on this subject. And hence, if thoughts of death do arise in some minds, they are regarded as unwelcome intruders and summarily ejected. Why should I, says one, suffer my thoughts to run upon a subject which might render me

gloomy, and give me a disrelish for business? Let the aged who are trembling under the weight of years ponder the solemnities of the grave! Let those who are stricken with a fatal malady be occupied with such reflections as are suited to a transition from time to eternity; but, as for me, I have other and more agreeable duties to discharge; at least for the present I will not surrender myself to such exercises as might cool my ardor, or moderate my exertions in the race with my competitors, for the honor and wealth of this world! And it is not singular that thoughts of death are unwelcome to him on whose path the golden god has scattered his shining dust, and over whose life forbidden pleasures shed their enchanting power; for the glitter of earthly prosperity blinds his mind to all that is great and glowing in the things of eternity, and the seductive charms of a delusive world hold his spirit a willing captive of the dust; so that, while he yields his reluctant assent to the truth that there is a time to die, it becomes not one of those strong convictions whose influence is heard in the conversation and seen in the conduct! And while he is continually reminded in the decay around him, that all created objects are subject to those laws of mutation whose silent but resistless operations are carrying all things to their dissolution, he does not allow his soul to be borne on the strong pinions of holy aspirations to that world where all things remain unblighted. The vanishing cloud, luminous with the sunset glow, is an emblem of those bright things which melt away under his touch; while the fading leaf and the withering

flower continually announce that "the fashion of this world passeth away!" Yes, all things material have their beginning, their growth, their maturity, and decay; from the delicate flower which blooms on the bleak and rocky cliff, to the brightest luminary in the firmament on high; from the atom that is constantly diminished by the friction of atmospheric waves, to the granite that yields particle after particle to the kissing billow of the deep; all—all are passing away.

The pen of history is daily chronicling on her pages the names of the great who had filled the world with their fame! So numerous are those who claim the admiration of the world, that, with all the dazzle of military renown, or the lustre of successful statesmanship, the charms of literature and science, and the more durable radiance of unsullied virtue—few of the multitude of the great who have passed away from among the living receive that homage which they deserve. The remembrance of not a few is displaced by other illustrious characters who have risen up in their places; but how many are daily passing into eternity who were never known beyond the immediate circle which was the sphere of their exertion. As the gentle rains which descend upon the ocean never ruffle its bosom nor hush its roar, so there are thousands daily departing without producing any perceptible effect upon society! Many remain unknown while living and unsung when dead; yet all men see enough of change and death within the circle of their observation, limited as it may be, to assure them that here they have no abiding city: and their own experience reiterates the lessons

of their mortality, if they have an eye to see, a mind to reflect, and a heart to feel. All have heard, not only from the holy word and the dying pillow, but from all objects, that "it is appointed unto man once to die!" All are conscious that whatsoever is earthly is hastening towards a dissolution, either immediate or remote; so that it scarcely seems necessary to have a monitor, like Philip of Macedon, to remind us that we are mortal. For, in all our occupations and walks, we look upon no living thing which is exempt from the tremendous necessity of dying. I behold the magnificent forest robed in its leafy apparel, the home of beasts and birds and millions of insects; but of all those leaves which flutter in the breeze there is not one which is not destined to fade — of all those beasts that roam its pathless wilds — of all the birds that warble their morning and evening songs through that wilderness, there is not one bird, or beast, that must not die. In the sphere of my labors I meet thousands of my fellow-creatures with greater or less promise of a long and sunny future, but that earthly future has a limit. I look over my assembled flock, and, as my eye wanders from the hoary-headed pilgrim over those manly forms where strong hearts beat, and the current of life flows full — and over youth flushed with beauty and health, even down to the little child that I have consecrated to God at the baptismal font — among these thousands there is not one who is not on his way to the sepulchre; among all the warm hands which I have or may yet grasp in friendship there is not one that shall not moulder in the tomb—not one counte-

nance now animate with life but will be stricken with the palor of death — not a voice whose friendly greetings vibrate through my soul but will be hushed in the silence of the grave — there is not an eye that glows with affection that shall not grow dim — not a brow clothed with thought but shall be shrouded with the shadow of death — and not one heart which beats in unison with mine but will one day be pulseless.

What an evil art thou, O! death, when I consider the desolations which mark thy path! When we think of the Edens which thou dost blight, the hopes which thou dost quench, the hearts which thou dost still, and the homes which thou makest desolate, do we not rightly call thee the great destroyer? Aye, thou art not satisfied with those whom thou hast already hurried to thy mansions, for thou hast set thy mark upon all the living, aged and young, parent and child — all, all must die.

Yet, notwithstanding this truth is echoed by the moans of the dying gale and the expiring gentle breeze; by the closing day and the ever-changing aspect of the world; by the earth and the heavens; there is no place where we realize it so well, and with so much profit, as at the sepulchres of our departed. More impressive are its instructions on this subject than the fall of empires, or the wasting pestilence; for nowhere can I feel my own frailty so well as at the grave of my friend. I may take my station on the banks of a flowing stream, whose waters are hastening with their tribute to the sea, and it may teach me the rapidity of Time's restless

current which is bearing me onward to eternity. I may watch the morning vapor as it lazily hangs around the mountain's side, and see its multiform evolutions as it rises and circles around the brow of the highest peak, and then instantly vanisheth into thin air, and I behold in its short-lived movements an emblem of human existence; for it seems to echo the question in its vanishing, "What is your life? It is even as a vapor, which appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away." I may watch the flying clouds; and their shadows, as they glide over the plain, say to me, "Man is a shadow that continueth not." I bend over the drooping flower, and it says, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down." And a thousand objects around me may utter the same lessons; but they fall not on my heart with that tremendous force with which the grave of my departed invests them. At the sepulchre of my friend I realize it more than anywhere else, *that I must die*. My friend who now slumbers in this tomb lived as I live, hoped as I hope, and rejoiced as I rejoice. He was conscious of all those emotions, whether pleasurable or painful, which I now experience. He formed one of that busy, bustling crowd, as I do this day. He was honorably known in the halls of legislation—in the court—in the Senate—in the pulpit—in the walks of business. He was prominent or humble—but he *was a living man*. Men bowed to him in respectful recognition. His name was carried to distant parts on his vessel, or to far-off markets on his wares. His opinion was solicited in all great

public movements; and his judgment quoted in all important projects, as they might affect the civil and commercial interests of the land. For years it was known through the country that he did business on such a street, and at that number. Tens of thousands read his name penciled in golden letters on the sign. "But the places that knew him shall know him no more."

Am I the head of a family? So was he. For years was he the strong staff which supported a numerous household. A gentle wife greeted him on the evening of each day, for many years, on his return from the counting-house, the office, the farm, or the shop; and sons and daughters showered upon him their smiles, and delighted him with their affectionate caresses. For such a long period did he give permanence to the joy and happiness of that domestic circle, that its members were scarcely conscious that these blessings belonged to the things that were transient. But the fatal day came when they were roused from their dreams to behold that all was vanity. The husband and the father can be so no more, for he is stricken with death.

Do I sometimes join in innocent amusements and pleasures, which lure us aside from the monotonous round of duties and anxieties, and cause us to forget, for a few hours, the vexatious cares and annoyances associated with our callings? He allowed himself the same relaxations; and moved as gaily as any within that circle of enchanting scenes and pleasures. But in the assemblies where his entrance produced an involuntary thrill, and his presence drew a thousand sparkling

eyes, he is no more seen, and his name is seldom, if ever, uttered. He who had an almost world-wide fame is now only remembered by a few loving hearts. He sleeps in the lonely grave; and but few of those who pass by take time to spell out his name upon the dim marble.

Am I known and loved in the sanctuary of God? He, too, was wont to mingle in the devotions of the assemblies of saints. For many years his seat was seldom vacant, for he was known as a pillar in the church. No interest of the congregation did he allow to languish; no charity that did not receive from him a cordial support. He filled the widow's heart with music, and dried the tears of the orphan. He responded to the call of the perishing, and sent on golden wings the news of salvation to the far-off heathen. And because he wrought long and well in the vineyard of the Lord, he was a pattern of good works. But it was only for the day of life that the Master had hired him; and when the shades of evening came, he was called up to receive his reward. Here at his grave all his life is re-enacted before my mind; and as the drama closes in this tomb, I feel that this is the end of man—this the goal of his earthly existence.

My friend died. He who moved in the same circle in which I move, held the same relations to the family and to the world which I hold, he is gone to the house appointed for all the living. That sun which now shines upon his grave, and those stars which now rise upon his lowly abode—all nature—the earth, and the spangled heavens upon which I now look, were contemplated and admired by him as I now

admire them. But here he sleeps, while they roll on and shine; and so, too, shall I slumber underneath the sod, while their rays fall silently around my mouldering dust.

Aye, my departed one once stood with me at this spot, and thought and felt as I do now as he looked upon the graves of others; but sickness came—death came—and the funeral obsequies; and here now he reposes until waked by the voice of the Son of God. Mortal—all are mortal; I will not thrust you from my mind, ye thoughts of my frailty, for ye are messengers come from heaven's high throne, to assist in binding my fleeting life to that which is immutable and eternal. I know, I feel, I too must die! True, this world is bright and beautiful, and it wearies me not; health flows through my veins and glows in my cheek; strength nerves my arm, and strong are the pulsations of my heart; my business, my family, and the many objects which I wish to accomplish, do press and clamor for death's delay; but he, the inexorable King of Terror, heeds not their voice, but disdains their entreaties. Death is coming; he has been approaching me year by year, and day by day. The passing hours, and minutes, and seconds, tell me as they fly that he is coming *nearer*. With an eagle's eye he holds me in view, and with a lion's heart he follows upon my path; in the city or in the forest, by land or by sea, by night and by day, he never falters nor wearies! O! yes, I feel it as I gaze upon yonder setting sun, that I have one day less—and now that gorgeous glow upon the mountain top vanishes, and dies away in the starlight heavens—yes, one hour less to live,

since I came to this tomb to commune with the dead. Yes, my last sickness will come — my physician will be calm and silent, he will breathe no word of hope — my wife and children will weep around my bed — and I will see the shadow of him who has so long pursued me fall upon my path — and I shall feel his skeleton hands clutch my heart-strings, while his icy embrace freezes my blood, and the tide of life stands still! All still — only the sobs of weeping loved ones will echo through that chamber where I bowed to the bidding of death. Cold and insensible shall I lie, while the last vigils of friendship shall be kept for the last night that I shall ever spend in my long and fondly-cherished home. And the morning light of another day will break, but I shall not welcome the rosy morn. The chirpings of the swallow and notes of the robin, that so often waked me to join in their song of praise, will not ravish my ears. The beautiful landscape, over which my eyes wandered with so much delight in early morn, will not be surveyed by me. Friends will gather around me, and draw aside the curtains to let in the light of day, that they may look upon my face, but I will not know it. They will caress and kiss the lifeless form, but my heart shall not thrill under the pressure of affection's hand, nor my lips throw back the glow of friendship's kiss. No, I shall be dead! They will shroud me for my burial, but I shall not behold my white apparel. They will lay me in the coffin, and I shall offer no resistance. Many familiar friends will gaze upon me there, but I shall not return their look. And those whom I most loved will give their last long look, and

I am shut out from the world in which I lived and moved. Gently is the lid laid over my face and screwed fast. Neighbors and friends are gathered, and I am carried out of my house never more to return. Even my name will pass from it, and strangers will dwell there. The funeral cortege will move away from those ancient trees, and over that familiar road to the sepulchres of my fathers. And there they will lay me in the grave, as they did my friend by whose tomb I write. And the man of God will utter the solemn but hopeful words, "We commit this body to the ground—earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust—in hope of the general resurrection and the life of the world to come."

And, having performed this last sad office, they will return to their homes and leave me. I shall be alone in the grave; alone shall I slumber. I shall no more speak. Strangers will read my brief history, which the hand of friendship may chronicle upon the marble, and then turn away with a sigh, and say, such is the end of man. Those in whose memories I may live will often come to strew flowers upon my grave and drop a tear of affection. They will plant the rose, the lily, and the evergreen, as emblems of a fragrant and beautiful immortality which they assign me in the Paradise of God. All this will take place with me—yes, all may say with *me*. Ah! it is a solemn thought, that every step brings us nearer to our enemy; a solemn thought that there is but one passage to eternity, and that lies through "death's iron gate." For—

"Sure 'tis a serious thing to die, my soul!
 What a strange moment must it be, when near
 Thy journey's end thou hast the gulf in view!
 That awful gulf no mortal e'er repass'd,
 To tell what's doing on the other side!
 Nature runs back and shudders at the sight,
 And every life-string bleeds at thought of parting."

Yes, the moment of death is one of thrilling solemnity; yet all must meet it, for "there is a time to die." But, blessed be God, he can arm us with that moral preparation which will carry us triumphantly through the last conflict, and enable us to echo back from the valley of the shadow of death, for the encouragement of the living, "O grave! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But, thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Christian knows that the grave is the home of the earthly, the bosom of God of the spiritual. For, as all material things are in motion, and will only rest when they find their appropriate centre, so the spirit which lives within us will only rest when borne to the bosom of Him who formed it. As the vapor that is lifted from the bosom of the sea never pauses until it has performed its mission and returned to its parent, so the soul finds true repose only after it has as faithfully performed its work, and, by the force of that spiritual law which is designed to govern it, it is drawn up to God. There it shall live forever. And, as I look upon this wasting world and upon my decaying frame, I rejoice

in the consciousness that I shall live when the heavens and the earth are no more.

“My spirit shall return to Him
That gave its heavenly spark;
Yet think not, sun, it shall be dim,
When thou thyself art dark!
No! it shall live again, and shine
In bliss unknown to beams of thine;
By Him recalled to breath,
Who captive led captivity,
Who robbed the grave of victory,
And took the sting from death!”

CHAPTER FIFTH.

THE GLORY OF MAN.

“Our glories float between the earth and heaven,
Like clouds that seem pavilions of the sun,
And are the playthings of the casual winds.”

AT the end of life's journey stands the open sepulchre to receive us, and to enclose all of man that is material and shadowy. Only that which is spiritual, that has emanated from us, will not go down into its darkness. As inquirers after the real and not imaginary worth of the things around us, we must not forget the true stand-point from which to survey them ; for, the position we occupy, and the medium through which we view objects, greatly influence the mind in the conceptions which it forms of the real or supposed character of those objects. When we look forward through life we are liable to form an improper estimate of the value of things ; for, if we look through that medium of delusive worth which the world has thrown around the objects of human pursuit, then will we realize in our after experience that the poet has truly sung —

“Distance lends enchantment to the view.”

But what sad mistakes do those make who contemplate life from such a point, that everything appears in a reversed character, and in a magnified light. To the untaught eye the glow-worm is larger and more resplendent than the orb which wheels in cloudless majesty far out in immensity, and which appears to the untutored observer as a feebly-burning taper. And equally false are the notions which men sometimes form of what is, or is not, desirable, permanent, or of intrinsic value, when deciding as to the objects of their pursuit, or the ends for which they propose to live and to toil. The unsanctified mind is restless; finding no elements of solid peace within itself, it seeks beyond and without itself the sources of that happiness for which it yearns. And in these efforts it may, after repeated exertions, form for itself a paradise in the future, and clothe it with such an aspect of loveliness, and people it with such objects as a morbid fancy may suggest as needful accompaniments of an earthly Eden. And if an indulgent Providence permits man to reach the designated post of honor, or that state of affluence which he had pictured in such lively colors — if a few whirling years have thrown him upon that sunny eminence that flashed so long and brilliantly to his eye, in the conscious possession of that of which he had dreamed, and which he had coveted, there is a momentary gush of joy that sheds its exhilarating influence over his soul — but it is not permanent; for, he has scarcely tasted the enjoyments of his new position before they are exhausted, or cease to afford delight. No sooner has he surveyed that high station for which he had

toiled so anxiously and long, than he finds it a weariness and vexation; because the responsibilities and cares which are its inevitable appendages, diminish the glory and dispel the charm which spell-bound his spirit for years; for, all that earth can give is doomed to bear thorns.

Far safer is it, and infinitely wiser is he, who goes in thought to the end of life's race and looks back to its beginning; examines the history of others, and studies the character and value of things by the testimony of those whose experience enabled them to form a proper estimate of earthly things, and to pronounce a just verdict upon them. For, although the sepulchre seems gloomy and silent, yet does it shed light upon things otherwise dark, because all its utterances are wise and truthful. Let us then stand together in the presence of this calm and solemn monitor, and listen to his voice as he speaks of the transient nature of all things. As a messenger of God, he announces far more solemnly and impressively than any other preacher, that "All flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it."

And, as we have already heard his lesson concerning the end of all the living, let us now hear him on the glory of man. Beautiful and fragrant is the flower, but it falleth to the earth and withereth; and so short-lived and perishable a thing is often the glory of man. But what is the glory of man? Doubtless, that upon which he sets the highest value,

and which constitutes his felicity. That to which all his thoughts tend, that for which his heart pulsates, and around which his holiest affections cluster. Whatever that may be, it constitutes *his* glory. He glories in its pursuit, and rejoices in its possession ; but it is obvious that, in a world made up of beings so various in their temperaments, so different in their pursuits, so unlike in their circumstances, and so diverse in their tastes, it is not the same thing with all. But whatever this glory of man may be, it is the paradise which he has formed and beautified with fountains and brooks, and flowers and music—all for himself. There he lives and loves ; there he offers his orisons and vespers ; and it is to him what the light is to the sun, or beauty to the landscape—his glory. It varies, however, with constitutional organization, and is influenced and modified by the position and calling of the individual.

There are those who may be properly styled domestic in their feelings, habits, and enjoyments. Their pleasures are chiefly found within the little home circle, and, therefore, their exertions are mostly directed to such additions and such improvements, in all that lies within that sphere, as will increase their delight. Fondly do parents cherish that group of sprightly children which daily encircle them. They leave no means untried, and neglect no opportunities to promote the intellectual and social culture of their offspring. And no stranger knows the emotions of pleasure with which parents contemplate their expanding forms and unfolding

minds. And after they have made the necessary attainments in useful and ornamental knowledge to fit them for the social circle, they are conscious of a lofty pride when they behold their children stepping forth into society, and by their many obvious accomplishments, attracting the admiring eyes of the multitude. They glory in them as so many new attractions to that family, honorably known and respected for generations. And there are perhaps few things of a temporal character in which man may more rationally glory than in a well-regulated family. For, as an institution, it is certainly designed and eminently fitted to promote our happiness; and, under judicious management, it may be productive of untold blessings to all its members. There, hearts beat in unison and spirits intimately blend. There, there is a transfusion of sympathy and love from one to the other.

“There blend the ties that strengthen
Our hearts in hours of grief,
The silver links that lengthen
Joy’s visits when most brief.”

It is the best part that is left us of Eden — it is a type of heaven; and we do not wonder that the heart should exult amid the scenes and enjoyments of *that* home which is unblighted, where none has drooped, where no shadow has yet fallen, no note of sorrow has yet been uttered, but where all is bright and vocal with merry voices. But how suddenly are such scenes changed! Over that circle of fond and

loving hearts there poises the dark angel, and shakes from his plumes the elements of disease, and they fall as the mildew upon the blossom. The fairest and strongest is bowed under sickness, and in a few days droops and dies. And another, and another, until there is nothing left but a few broken hearts, weeping over the memories of other days; the sad memorials of the truth that the glory of man is as the flower of the grass.

And O! what solemn lessons does the sepulchre utter of some such family scenes. Perhaps it tells us of the beautiful daughter, or the noble son, whose fond but mistaken parents displayed more taste in the decorations of the casket, than care in burnishing the priceless jewel which it contained; and who were determined that their child should dazzle in society, but labored not to make it shine in heaven. And now that the flower has dropped from the parent stem, the aroma of a virtuous and holy life in the lost one, which is the only balm that heals the wounded spirit, does not soothe their bereaved hearts. For, not only has their glory faded, but no hope cheers them, that the spirit of that fair form which they laid in the tomb has risen to the companionship of the holy around the throne of God.

There are others who glory in pleasure; that say to their hearts, "Go to, now, I will prove thee with mirth;" and to scenes of gaiety and mirth they hasten. The votaries of pleasure and of fashion, they will gather what sweets may be thought to exist in a life of frivolity. They are decked out in costly apparel. The world is laid under tribute, and the

toil of many nations is pressed into the business of attiring such for the drawing-room, the theatre, or the levee. And they have a butterfly's glory while they flutter and dazzle in the blaze of jewels. But alas! how often do the frequenters of those scenes, and the lovers of these enjoyments find, that such a life is destitute of solid peace, and at best nothing but an empty show; for, underneath those gems that sparkle on the snowy brow there live dark, corroding thoughts; and beneath that richly-ornamented satin there may lie a broken heart; and, while that outward structure of clay is beautified to such a degree that it might be mistaken for an angel's abode, the inhabitant may scorn and loathe these vile trappings of earth as unbecoming its nature and destiny. Had we the power of drawing a truthful testimony from one and all of the multitudes of those who glory in such scenes, they would with one accord corroborate the declarations of Solomon concerning a life of pleasure, and say, "that it is vanity and vexation of spirit." "We might ask the brilliant courtier, and Lord Chesterfield would tell us, I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and I do not regret their loss. I have been behind the scenes; I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which move the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decorations to the astonishment of an ignorant audience." "We might ask the world's poet, and we would be answered by an imprecation, by that splendid genius who,"

“Drank every cup of joy, heard every trump
Of fame; drank early, deeply drank, drank draughts,
That common millions might have quenched, then died
Of thirst, because there was no more to drink.”

But, though we should have the testimony of all who ever gloried in pleasure as to its worthless and fading character, none could so well instruct us as the sepulchre. All that glitter is here extinguished; and all the pride and pomp of earth go down into its darkness. It has received the sporting youth and the thoughtless maiden; the wit and the buffoon; the lordly worldling and the haughty matron; and the duration of their glory stretched through a few vexatious years, and then sank into a gloom which the ages of eternity will not break.

There are those, also, who glory in wealth. Many use this world so as to abuse it. They know not the only *true* value of wealth; and are ignorant of the objects God designed to be promoted, and the ends to be accomplished, by its bestowal. Instead of appropriating it in a manner so as to produce lasting excellence, many rejoice in its glitter, and call that its glory. As everything is beautiful in its time and in its place, so everything has an excellence peculiar to itself. There is a glory in the sun which rolls in the firmament above, and there is a glory in wealth. But as yonder sun would not glow to the eyes of admiring millions, nor wreath nature in smiles, and cover the earth with golden harvests, did he retain his rays within his bosom, thus wealth has no glory so long as it lies in iron coffers, or is held under the hard pressure of the miser's grasp, or is used to feed the

pride and passions of man. It must go out on its ordained mission, and wake a world of misery into life and joy; breathing hope into the desponding, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and beautifying sin-stricken humanity with its benefactions—then is wealth glorious. The hand of affluence may sow fields which will require many angels to gather, when Christ comes on his great white throne to reap the earth. The rich have great responsibilities, which are inherited with their wealth, and many feel them. It is a fearful trust to which they are called; for, as stewards of the great Jehovah, their accounts will be examined at the bar of the final day, and their disbursements approbated or condemned. He who fortunately or unfortunately commands millions, should have more than human wisdom to direct him in their management and use, that they may yield him a harvest of glory. When God gives such mental capacities to an individual, that his intellectual furniture fits him to legislate, or to command in the field—to rule on a throne, or to send forth from the retirement of the study offsprings of his mind which mould the character of thousands, sending out an influence which has power to mar with stains of vice, or jewel with virtues the character of immortal beings—all acknowledge that he has a fearful mission, which is destined to issue in a glorious or terrible future. To prostitute such talents to the cause of vice, is to use immortal treasures to buy immortal woes; for he who flings with a vile hand the coin imaged with the King of Kings into the dust, must agonize under purchased wrath. But is not wealth a gift of

God under another form? Do we not rightly baptize it talent? Is it not thus called by Him who has bestowed it? Aye, a talent which is to be used to promote the sovereign's honor, and thus insure the subject's glory.

If, then, we would have the true glory of wealth, we should be God's almoners — his stewards and agents, wisely managing and funding our treasures, that, in common with the other divinely-ordained instrumentalities, they may contribute to the elevation of mankind, to the diffusion of light, and the covering of the earth with the knowledge of salvation. We would not condemn any lawful use of wealth. We believe it designed to minister to the comfort of its possessor and of his family; and if that requires it, or if it will promote their happiness and not inflict an injury, he may employ it to construct elegant mansions, and ornament them in princely style. He may have his spacious gardens and parks, and probably many other things which may be regarded as needful appendages of the wealthy and great; for all these expenditures will promote industry, and give food and raiment to the worthy laborer. But if he would have large and durable comfort, he must suffer the streams of his affluence to roll beyond the domestic circle, beyond his gardens and his parks, and carry their blessings over the wide fields of our afflicted race; — that by those streams there may grow the tree of knowledge, of whose fruit the poor may eat — and the tree of life, which yields immortal nourishment, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. All this the affluent can do, by en-

dowing institutions of learning, and by enriching with their benefactions associations instituted for the spread of the Gospel. The cause of Missions, Domestic and Foreign — the cause of Education — the Bible — the Tract, and many other Christian Unions, are mediums through which he can diffuse his benefactions; and then will the true glory of wealth become visible, when it makes the earth radiant with the blessings and hopes of Christianity. The children of this world are pronounced wise because they keep their capital working, and multiplying as it works. And it is the same principle, only extended a little farther in its bearings, which controls the action of the wealthy Christian. O! yes, immortal ages will bear witness that this is the true glory of wealth—when it is made to beautify eternal mansions, and to augment the number of their occupants. To swell the number of those who walk through the Paradise of God, who rejoice along the river of life, and wake to endless praise the harps of gold—this is a work of true glory. Let it then be our glory, if blessed with wealth, to wake millions of heathen voices in the eternal song. Would you not, if you could, in the day of judgment, place a harp in the hand of that degraded heathen and a crown of life upon his head, and send him white-robed into the golden city to join in the song of Moses and the Lamb? And would you not then, amid the throes of a dissolving universe, when the shrieks of the lost and the crash of worlds shall send tremors through all the framework of your spirit, and you shall see eternity flashing around you in all its tremendous realities, and revealing

the worth of the soul and the awful price of its redemption, would you not then experience more pleasure in sending one immortal soul into eternal life, than you would in the enjoyment of unbounded wealth for ten thousand years? And yet, that which you cannot do then you may do now. For, behold the cry of the perishing comes from the habitations of cruelty, and vibrates upon our ears; and their eternal destiny hangs upon *thy will*, O! affluent man.

But let us once more interrogate the sepulchre where we stand in relation to the false and the true glory of wealth. It tells us, that while it swallows up the empty glitter of the worldling's grandeur, it claims not, it destroys not, the abiding glory of wealth; for that belongs to heaven, and is immortal. It will live and shine forever in the objects whom it lifted out of the depths of sin, and lighted to the mansions on high. But behold the tomb where sleeps the man, the philosophy of whose life was that of Epicurus, and see how his glory is turned into shame. The owner of many broad acres has but an equal space with his servant whereon to repose his death-stricken limbs; and the former occupant of a princely mansion is now the inmate of the narrow grave. And although his body reposes in the dust, his soul finds not its home in heaven. But he who lived according to the rules of Christ has a green memory on earth, while his spirit rejoices in the palace of God.

“A man,” says Jeremy Taylor, “may read a sermon, the best and most pathetic ever man preached, if he shall but enter the sepulchres of kings. In the same Escorial where

the Spanish princes live in greatness and power, and decree war or peace, they have wisely placed a cemetery, where their ashes and their glory shall sleep till time shall be no more; and where our kings have been crowned their ancestors lie interred — and they must walk over their grand-sires' heads to take the crown. There is an acre sown with royal seed, the copy of the greatest change from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like gods to die like men. There is enough to cool the flames of lust, to abate the heights of pride, to appease the itch of covetous desires, to sully and dash out the dissembling colors of a lustful, artificial, and imaginary beauty. There the warlike and peaceful, the fortunate and the miserable, the beloved and the despised princes mingle their dust, and pay down their symbol of mortality, and tell all the world that when we die our ashes shall be equal to kings', and our accounts easier, and our pains for our crowns shall be less."

Having considered human glory under three different forms — that of the family, of pleasure, and of wealth — it remains yet for us to ask of the sepulchre as to the glory of fame. It is true that the glory of man appears under many other forms; for, as the desire is innate and universal, so will it evolve itself under a countless variety of aspects. Man is born for glory, and if he finds not that which is real and substantial he grasps its shadow. For, as the visible creations of Jehovah are only manifestations or embodiments of those beautiful and grand conceptions which reposed in the Divine mind from all eternity, until externalized in the works of His

power, so, in the human mind, those objects in which man glories lie in undeveloped desires, until outwardly manifested in the object of his choice. The conception of that which he prefers lies deep within his soul, whether it is low or exalted, and, according as its character may be, so will be the form which his glory assumes. But it is not necessary to enumerate any others, since we have a fair exhibition of it under these several heads; indeed, its character and perishableness may be seen wherever and in whatever outward manifestations it may produce itself. But let us consider it for a moment under the last-mentioned form. That all men desire fame is as evident as the fact that all men breathe. It is an essential property in human nature; and the mind destitute of it would lack one of its prime elements, and be like the eagle without his wings, or the lion without his strength. But for it, none would rise to respectable standing, much less soar to that elevation where the range of intellectual vision is widest, and the eye of science darts its rapid glances over the immense fields of knowledge. Its early motions are witnessed in the little child, whose first essays at play or study are accompanied with a quick glance at the mother for a smile of approbation. And from the humble position of the little prattler by my knee, up to the loftiest pinnacle of fame where man has inscribed his name, there beats not a heart between these two extremes that longs not for approbation, and that loves not the music of human applause. Persons covet admiration, whether it is accorded for the setting out of a good dinner, or doing a useful job of

work, or successfully marshalling and leading to victory the steel-bristling army, or the brilliant achievements in legislation and diplomacy. All love glory in this form, and loving, pursue it. But although there is this universality of desire for the esteem of others, and this unquenchable thirst for glory, we should not forget that there is a difference in kind; we should always recognize the distinction between the human and the spiritual. Human glory will perish because it is human; the spiritual will endure because it is divine. And while the desire is indestructible, because a part of the mind, the glory which man reaps will be lasting or evanescent as the character of the object from which it is derived is frail or immutable. We are invited to glory in purity, in virtue, and in God. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the rich in his riches, but let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord!" To glory in that which is durable and good is everywhere enjoined in the gospel, and represented as an object of legitimate pursuit. The joys of eternal salvation are offered to those who by "persevering in well-doing seek for honor, glory, and immortality." But this is different from that empty fame which originates with man and terminates in the tomb. The military hero whose chief end is to exalt himself and immortalize his name, is grasping at a shadow. He may bear himself proudly through scenes of carnage, and the groans of the wounded and dying may be the musical harbingers of those notes of applause which will intoxicate his brain on his return from the successful

campaign. He may succeed in getting a place on the historic page, and in filling the world with his fame, and pass from height to height until he has risen to the summit of imperial rule; but if his aims have no higher origin or tendency than self, he will, meteor-like, dazzle and blaze for a moment and then leave the world in thicker gloom. Those sounds of applause may exhilarate his spirits while riding in triumph on a wave of fortune, but when washed by an adverse billow on some lonely St. Helena, to die a broken-hearted prisoner, his glory, like a beautiful bubble, bursts and vanishes into thin air, and on his tomb it is written, "Thus passeth the glory of the world." And O! how does the well-earned fame of the great diminish in real worth when the shadows of the sepulchre fall around them! If the man of genius, of letters, or philosophy, has sought glory from men more than from God, what avails it that he is loaded with chaplets and wreathed with laurels, bound upon his brow by manly hands, and decorated with mementoes of woman's love! how empty and worthless do all appear as he comes to the open grave! Can these earthly honors soothe him in the dying strife? Can the recollection of days spent amid luxurious scenes, and in brilliant circles, still one throb of anguish? Can all the distinctions of a successful career shed one gleam of light into the dark valley? Can golden honors unbar the gates of paradise, that his race may be yet more brilliant and glorious? Ah! no. If he has only sought the praise of man, and undervalued the praise of God, all

that he hath is worthless, and his glory, which the thoughtless envied, is like the autumnal flower, which blooms a few hours and then falls to the earth, and its leaves no one gathers. And such is the glory which crowns the lives of all the illustrious, that in whatever sphere they may move, or whatever they may achieve for their country's honor, or the church's interest; all that is earthly will perish, and only that which links itself with God will abide, bright and beautiful, forever. Such then is the glory of man—frail, short-lived, and transient—vanishing like the beauties of the rainbow—evanescent as the gorgeous glow of the evening cloud—passing away like sweet melodies on the dying breeze.

But there is true and lasting glory in all the forms which we have considered, provided our aims and purposes in all the relations of life contemplate the honor of God and the good of man. Let us then glory in God, and, with Paul, in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. For if we make *that* the centre of our affections, and the shrine whither we bring and lay all our crowns of joy, then those distinctions and honors which we may receive from this world will be baptized by the blood of the cross with a fadeless immortality, seeing that all are made tributary to the divine glory. Thus we may have a legitimate glory in usefulness and goodness; and, because it springs from God, it claims a lifetime with the Eternal. And should these pages fall under the eye of one whose sad experience has taught him the vanity of that glory which comes not from God—who has been drawn far into the

paths of corruption, and has sullied his immortal spirit to such a degree that the dark shadows of despair chill every feeble purpose to rise to an elevation of purity and hope, so that in view of his frequent failures he yields to the current of passion as the fatigued mariner gives way to the opposing tide that bears him to the fearful gulf—let him not yield to despondency.

“Cast not the clouded gem away,
 Quench not the dim but living ray;—
 My brother man, beware!
 With that deep voice which from the skies,
 Forbade the Patriarch’s sacrifice,
 God’s angel cries forbear.”

Rise again and link your next purpose of good with the hand that was pierced on Calvary, and it will raise you to His fellowship and glory. And if animated by His spirit, whose glory was in going about and doing good, and our hearts are pervaded by his love, then will the outflows of our being be like streams in a desert land, waking sweet melodies where’er they flow. For the love of Christ will constrain us to live a life of charity; and true godliness, and practical benevolence form the *highest glory* of man.

“See the lone wand’rer ’mid the wastes of death
 Rejoicing, hails the Alpine blossom’s breath,
 As shuddering at the glacier’s awful power,
 He seeks the beauty of the meek-eyed flower,
 And there reposes in a steadfast trust,
 That on the plant no avalanche storm will burst.
 What kindles thus his faith and calms his fears?
 The seal of love and hope the blossom bears;

Tho' round him heave a dark and frozen flood,
One thought is peace — is safety, "God is good;"
Nor could the wand'rer idly turn away;
His lip might move not, but his heart would pray;
And he would gather in that musing hour,
Amid those trophies of Jehovah's power,
New strength of soul, a grander scope of thought:
His mind to nobler purpose would be wrought,
And feel and own, in this calm, solemn mood,
That 'tis man's highest *glory to be good.*"

CHAPTER SIXTH.

IN THE SEPULCHRE THE CONFLICTS OF LIFE END.

“Thither the poor, the pris’ner, and the mourner,
Fly for relief, and lay their burdens down.”

“Weep not for him who dieth,
For he sleeps and is at rest;
And the couch on which he lieth,
Is the green earth’s quiet breast.”

WITHIN the compass of human life there are crowded immense interests. Upon this theatre are results wrought out, which will be contemplated with complacency or remorse through a long eternity. Here each one builds for himself a character which will give a passport to a miserable or glorious future; fashioning a name that will be fragrant or offensive in heaven and on earth, while it will constitute a tower of strength in which those may shelter who are impressible by his example, or a pile of ruins which will bury golden immortal hopes for all who are corrupted by his influence. And limited as the sphere may seem which our vision spans, there are forces acting within that circle whose vibrations thrill far into eternity. Here all act — all are in motion; some in the pursuit of substantial good, others

chasing phantoms. We are in the midst of a scene of incessant activity. There can be no quiet, no peace, no rest here, for it is on the great arena of life that the earthly and the spiritual, the human and divine, are waging their hard conflicts. Activity is a law which controls all things, or rather the manifest result of those hidden forces which reside in all created objects. And wisely has it been ordained that it should be so. For it is the ceaseless roll of the ocean that makes it a fountain of health, and the vibration of the atmosphere which fits it to sustain life and invigorate the frame. Our forests are robed in their beautiful dress; our hills and valleys smile; our fields wave with golden harvests; and the world is full of life and joy, because the heavens and the earth — yea, all things are in motion.

And while much of the activity in human society aims not at the accomplishment of good, but is in direct conflict with the laws of man's being and the rule of heaven, yet is it well that God has made the mind of man restless, and accorded to it liberty of choice. Even if there were a disposition for inactivity, there is no place for indolence nor repose between the cradle and the grave. For each day brings its cares and its toils. Life is a river, which is only beautiful and refreshing while it flows. It is a voyage over heaving billows, which forbids us to pause — a warfare which will not allow us to ungird our armor until the final victory is achieved. But here, at the sepulchre, all our toils and conflicts end. Here the river has found the ocean — the racer has reached the goal — the mariner has gained the

haven — and the soldier has won his last triumph. All toil ends here. And O, what multitudes are doomed through long years to eke out a scanty subsistence. For while a few in some measure escape the decree, “in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread,” the masses are conscious that it has fallen upon them with painful severity. Behold the numbers who toil in our cities from early dawn till late in the night: if the compensation was such as to afford them the needful comforts of life, the labor would be cheerfully performed, for then it would bring its blessings. But there is the poor widow with her helpless babes, and her heart laboring with heavy woes; she feels no responsive throb from all those living hearts that beat through that great city. She is alone with her helpless ones. Patiently she plies her needle until her fingers bleed. Often is she tempted to seek a little rest, for the night is far advanced, and nature clamors for repose; but her eye falls upon that pallet of straw where sleep her children with only a few tatters to shield their tender limbs from the piercing cold, and the thought of their cries for bread in the morning goes like an iron into her soul, and excites her to another effort. She rallies her exhausted strength and toils on, cheered with the hope that even for misery and poverty there will one day be sweet repose in the grave. Wearily and heavily do those nights roll on; and through all her days she is cheered by no smile, encouraged by no sympathising look; for rough words and a haughty bearing accompany the small pittance doled out by her iron-hearted oppressor for that work which is

impregnate with the strength of her soul and the blood of her heart, and baptized with the widow's and the orphan's tears. And with unfailing confidence in the wisdom and goodness of an overruling Providence, she continues faithful to her charge, until He, under whose eye she toiled, and to whose throne she looked, and in whose promises she trusted, says it is enough, and sends his angels to bring that care-worn spirit from that humble dwelling to the palace of God.

And what a spectacle would oppress the mind could we penetrate those gloomy mines, where thousands are born, and live and die, and who associate nothing bright or pleasant with life, for they know it only in its toils and tears. Look where we will — in the shop or the counting-house, on the field or in the study — everywhere are arms in motion and hearts palpitating under hard pressures. All these shall find repose in the peaceful tomb. All care and all business will end there. There will be felt no more fears and anxieties about the success of this enterprise or that speculation, the safety of this investment or that outlay. No more pressures to cloud the mind and weigh down the spirits, and to annoy and make unhappy a whole family. In the tomb there are no more transactions to test the shrewdness and skill of competitors in trade. There the husbandman, who long and faithfully tilled the soil, under whose cultivating hand the wilderness was displaced by fields of waving grain, whose industry brought nourishment from the earth for hungry millions, and who for many years stood by the storehouse of Nature and dealt out bread to the needy, at last finds a quiet

retreat. Often, as he watched the revolving earth when it rolled up garnished with countless beautiful things which had risen from their winter's grave and filled the world with fragrance, he had pictured to his mind the prospect of those who go down into the tomb with the assurances of hope; and he gladly toiled on until death bid him rest from his labors.

And there, too, sleeps sweetly the man of honest and hard labor. There is one whom I often saw coming forth from his cottage in the early blush of morning, and threading his way through fields and woods until he reached the scene of his daily work. And manfully did he bend to toil under a scorching sun, animated with thoughts of home and the prospect of the evening which would bring him to his neat and quiet abode, where happy and cheerful hearts were awaiting his return. One evening, as I was returning from some pastoral visits, I observed him as he had given the last stroke of the axe, and, as he laid it aside, it was with a countenance beaming with satisfaction that he surveyed the work he had accomplished; with a grateful heart he lifted up his thoughts to heaven, thankful to the great Father for the health and strength he had afforded, and then, with a rapid step and a bounding heart, he turned his face homeward. Rapidly did the distance between him and his home diminish. Long before he reached his cottage I saw a group of sprightly children running to welcome their beloved father; for to children days seem like years: all at once they grasped those manly hands which had grown hard with toil, and, with the least one borne on his arm, and

escorted by the others, he entered his humble dwelling; and there, under the caresses of those little ones and the smiles of a gentle wife, he had a happiness which is but seldom enjoyed by princes. I drew near to that family and was kindly welcomed to the poor man's cottage. Our conversation soon turned upon the incidents of the day; he spoke of his labor and his condition with a cheerful spirit, and I discovered that all shared his feelings. It was pleasant to go there and learn how the grace of God can sustain and comfort, and what a glow of peace and contentment it sheds through humble life. For years was he given to unbroken toil; but the blessing of God was upon it, and the labor of his hands was prospered; his children were like trees growing by the water-brooks of life, whose virtues were fresh and visible; and many pronounced them blessed. I knew him long, and loved him well. But sickness came, and like the oak whose bosom had been bared to many a storm, and stood firm amid the shock of elements, at last bowed and gently sank upon the lap of earth. I was called to his bedside, but only to see how a good man dies, and to be strengthened by the lessons which flowed from his dying lips. I had attended others through the struggles of the final hour, and heard at other bedsides lamentations and fears uttered for the wife and children, but from him I heard only words of consolation and trust; and sweetly as if spoken out of heaven did his dying prayer fall upon my ears. After he had pressed an affectionate and hopeful farewell, he folded his hands and lifted his eyes to heaven, and said, "O!

my merciful and faithful God, I can toil no more for my beloved ones; but 'Thou art the Father of the fatherless, and husband of the widow,' into Thy hands I commit them and my spirit — Lord Jesus receive me — amen," and he breathed no more.

“Sweet is the scene where Christians die,
Where holy souls retire to rest;
How mildly beams the closing eye!
How gently heaves the expiring breast!
So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies a wave along the shore.”

It was a beautiful morning in the latter end of May that the neighbors gathered around that neat cottage, as by a common impulse of sympathy for the bereaved and regard for the dead. The rich and the poor, the young and the old were there — for they all loved him. There is something beautiful in a country funeral, where all classes and all ranks meet and mingle to follow their neighbor and friend to the grave. And many were the expressions of heartfelt sympathy and regret as they looked upon his face for the last time. And as God had given him a calm evening for his peaceful death so had he ordered a beautiful day for his burial. The one seemed emblematic of his brilliant end; the other of his blissful eternity. For on the evening I repaired to attend him in his last moments, as I was approaching his house, a dark mountain of clouds which had just poured their tribute into the lap of the green earth, suddenly rose, and suffered the sun to sink behind the horizon in his full-orbed

glory, while he threw a gorgeous glow upon the storm-clouds which had a while obscured his brightness; a striking emblem, thought I, as I came away from that house of mourning, of the scene which had transpired within. Thus also seemed that morning, on which we had assembled to follow his remains to the tomb, prophetic of the glory amid which his spirit rejoiced; for the sun shone bright, and nature was fresh and fragrant; all labor was suspended, and the people neatly attired; not the sound of a hammer nor a note of the plough-boy was heard; that universal quiet so soothing to hearts smitten with grief reigned over the landscape, and was only broken by the soft notes of a dove in a large willow which shaded the cottage, and in whose spreading boughs she had often made music for the poor cottager; and the occasional sound of the tolling bell which announced that the hour for the mournful service had arrived. His employer, a man whose generosity to the poor and kindness to the afflicted often filled me with admiration, had his carriage placed in front to convey the family of the deceased, and then a long line of other neat vehicles, and a large number on foot, formed the funeral cortège. And as we moved towards the church, in low sounds were uttered eulogies, that kings might covet. And when his body was lowered into the grave, and dust was committed to dust, we said "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, yea saith the spirit from henceforth, for they rest from their *labors* and their works do follow them." And there was a response of tears from the rich and the poor; and from all hearts there seemed

to go up the silent prayer—“ Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

“ For him no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;
No children run to lisp their sire’s return,
Or climb his knee, the envied kiss to share.”

No! he sleeps sweetly in the grave, and his memory is blessed. Farewell my first spiritual born—my friend and fellow-heir of glory.

In the grave also rests the statesman who so long and gallantly steered the ship of state ; faithfully did he serve his country ; in war and in peace he was ever the true patriot ; by the exertions of his intellect he threw off many a brilliant page for his country’s history ; when dangers were present he was ready to meet them ; when storms darkened the political horizon and passions rose in fearful conflict—when the body politic was quivering in every fibre with alarm, and the nation’s heart trembled almost pulseless, and fear had fallen upon the people, it was his office to quiet the storm, and to heal the discords. But, ah ! how often was his spirit wounded by unkindness ! his patriotic exertions were pronounced the fruits of selfishness, and the offspring of ambition ; the eye of envy was ever ready to detect flaws in his character—the tongue of slander was always moving with utterances of disparagement ; and hands which should have been employed in weaving garlands to decorate his brow were busied in preparing crowns of thorns to wound his temples ; but, in the midst of opposing influences, he

remained firm ; true to his cause, sublime in his conceptions of duty, and exalted in his convictions of that which would be lasting and glorious for his country, he stood invested with that majestic grandeur which the gifted Virgil so eloquently accords to Mezentius.

“ He like a solid rock by seas enclosed,
To raging winds and roaring waves exposed,
From his proud summit looking down disdains
Their empty clamor, and unmoved remains.”

Among the things which we have most cause to mourn, as a people, is the want of a proper appreciation of the great and useful while they live. No sooner does it become manifest that a great intellect is rising and shooting its beams across the earth, than there are those found, who, instead of doing homage to the rising star, labor to diminish its light, and would, if they could, quench its glory in forgetfulness and gloom. But, as they cannot pluck him from that orbit in which he is fitted to move, nor yet endure the strength of his shining, their hearts, like those stagnant pools which are troubled by the sunbeams, send up their foul vapors to eclipse his brightness. Prejudice, envy, and selfishness often render men incapable of appreciating that which is noble and exalted. And it is a humiliating affliction which the patriot must endure, to have his path beset, his progress trammled, and his efforts encumbered by the arts and low tricks of the demagogue, who has mistaken himself for his country — who would be content to thrive on the ruins of the commonwealth which has given him birth and shelter, and

who would win renown by scattering with his vile hands to the winds the ashes of her greatness. All illustrious characters are doomed to encounter the displeasure of minds that move in small circles and give birth to nothing higher than detraction. Yea, too often is it the sad experience of those who have done most to advance every interest of the country, and to make her history luminous with glory, that, instead of being appreciated and honored, (the only rewards after which the lofty intellect aspires,) they are neglected and calumniated. For there are serpents along the most flowery paths of life, who, while concealed from observation, are ever hissing and flinging their venom upon the deserving and the just. And I do not wonder that those of conscious intellectual strength and uprightness of intention sometimes feel like planting their foot upon those hearts that never throb with a generous emotion, and crushing them as they would a noisome and venomous insect.

Perhaps none can know but those whose entire existence has been devoted to unremitting labor in public life, how dearly purchased was every honor which they enjoyed. But he who never swerved from duty, who always aimed to do right, who stood unmoved when others would have shrunk from the responsibilities of the hour, welcomes the calm of life's evening, the end of his conflicts. Sweet are the closing hours of his eventful existence when the storms which beat upon him are sighing out their last groans, and the war of elements which raged around him is dying away. The sun sometimes appears far more brilliant and glorious when

setting in the calm of an evening sky, than while he walked the firmament, partly obscured by the vapors which rose from the marshes and lowlands which he warmed. And so he, who long and faithfully stood upon the watch-towers of freedom, and whose bosom bears many a scar received in those battles through which the nation struggled to greatness and to glory, retires into the valley of death far more resplendent than he ever was in life, doing homage to Christianity by leaning only upon the staff of its promises, confessing that God and eternity alone are great, and is followed by a nation's regrets and tears. Here, then, in the sepulchre he reposes — the envied, the hated, and the loved. Here no enemy pursues him; no shaft of calumny pierces; no vexatious and wasting cares annoy him in his quiet retreat. The many brilliant conflicts with other intellects are ended, and he sleeps humbly and peacefully as a child. And now, withdrawn from the forum and the senate, he lives in many devoted hearts; and as the page of history unfolds his illustrious deeds and exalted virtues, even those who were wont to depreciate his worth are loud in their applauses.

Here, also, rest those who were the originators and supporters of humane and Christian enterprises. Hard did they struggle to usher into existence and bring into favor with the public those homes for the unfortunate and wretched, which have shed consolation and peace into desolate and weary hearts. Feeling for "others' woes," they went forth on errands of mercy, their feet rejoicing in the way of benevolence, and their hands never weary in dispensing blessings.

They founded hospitals and asylums for the unfortunate and sick. They provided homes for the outcasts, and became the friends of the friendless. It is amazing, when we inquire into the origin of charitable institutions, through what difficulties they pressed into existence, and what opposition they encountered all along their progress until the tide of public sympathy began to flow in their favor. Nothing but a deep, unsullied, and operative love for the poor and benighted, and the consciousness of the immense and lasting benefits to society, could have sustained those noble souls, through whose exertions those moral enterprises were set on foot which now send out their healing streams through all the earth. Whether the blessings which these are designed to convey are bodily or spiritual, or both, they required the toil of years to bring them into general favor. It was long before the generous sailor found a safe asylum, after he was so worn and weather-beaten in the service of his country that he was no longer able to discharge the duties of his calling; for temples, and bethels, and chaplains for those who go down into the sea, and pause at Christian ports like birds of passage, were only recently secured for this class of men, who are the general benefactors of society.

Protracted and indefatigable exertions were required, even in connection with the winning and constraining power of a Christian lady, who, with the spirit of a Howard, has journeyed from State to State, and it was by her faithful representations of the neglect, and in some instances the inhumanity with which the poor insane were treated in our almshouses, that

she prevailed on legislators to provide comfortable asylums and proper care and treatment for this unhappy class of citizens. And such is the early history of all other institutions which demanded the active charities of men to give them life and make them a blessing. All made many ineffectual appeals, met with cold looks and blunt refusals, and sometimes with open opposition. Rocky, indeed, is the human heart; for only will its sympathies warmly and freely flow after it is smitten with the rod of Jesse. Rest then in peace, ye true-hearted and self-sacrificing friends of humanity! Ye endured the scorn of the heartless, and the abuse of the covetous, but you bore yourselves nobly, and triumphed; and now that the Mission which has borne salvation to the far-off heathen, and the society which gives an open Bible to the poor, and those other instrumentalities which make glad the distressed, and light millions on the road to heaven, while all these institutions are shedding life, light, and happiness over an afflicted world, ye slumber in the hallowed grave. Your conflicts have ended in the tomb, and your souls have found repose in heaven; and of you it has already been written —

“To the blind, the deaf, the lame,
To the ignorant and vile,
Stranger, captive, slave, ye came,
With a welcome and a smile.
Help to all ye did dispense,
Gold, instruction, raiment, food;
Like the gifts of Providence,
To the evil and the good.”

In the sepulchre end also the trials and labors of the ambassador of God: although he had gone forth with a commission drawn in heaven, bearing the seal of the King of Kings, and with messages of peace from the Sovereign of the universe to a revolted world, yet was he not received by those to whom he preached the "Good News" as an accredited messenger from the court of heaven. The multitude heard with indifference the solemn words of life and of death, of heaven and of hell. Some smiled at his earnestness; others ridiculed and scorned; and because they would not take warning and flee the wrath to come he wept in secret for them. And those who hearkened to his words and yielded submission to the claims of God, often filled him with anxieties, and caused him to wet his pillow with midnight tears. For behold their friendships were fickle, their piety unstable, and they loathed the descending manna because they lusted after the grosser meats of base appetites; and after they had been a while in the green pastures and along the pleasant streams of salvation, they went back and "walked no more with Jesus." All this afflicted the pastor's heart, and he cried — "O! that my head were waters and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Faithful ones there were who sympathised with his work, and who stood around him and ministered like Aarons and Hurs; but these knew but few of the pressures and conflicts of the man of God. Affliction and poverty both did their office in weaning his affections from the things that are seen, and causing him to cast the

anchor of his hope within the veil as the only place where they shall neither hunger nor thirst; where there are neither pains nor tears, and where the inhabitant shall no more say I am sick. Well do I remember a faithful, godly man, whom I was accustomed to hear in my childhood declare the unsearchable riches of Christ. Age and want came with their infirmities and cares; and because his tongue was no longer like the pen of a ready writer, and there were itching ears and fastidious hearers, the venerable minister became a burden, and his voice could no longer charm the dull ear. After a little manœuvring and hesitation, it was concluded that he should be dismissed. He was duly informed that he could no longer preach for the people who had grown up under his service. Penniless and infirm, he was thrown out to be cared for as the fowls of the air, "which neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns." The blow was too severe for the feebleness of age, and God in mercy permitted him to become the second time a child. And often did he wander to the sanctuary whose doors had been closed against him, and there he sat by the gate of the temple and wept away his hour, and then returned to his cheerless home. Sometimes he would lose himself; and often did I direct his wandering footsteps into the way that led to his home; and when assured that he was in the right road, with a countenance beaming with kindness he would dismiss me, saying, "God bless you, dear boy." But after a few years thus spent, the Lord brought his pilgrimage to a close, for He took him, and we were invited to follow his remains to the sepulchre. Well

do I remember that solemn occasion ; for although a mere lad, the scene made such an impression upon my mind that it is vividly before me even now. The words of the preacher came with thrilling power, as he pointed to that coffin which contained the shrouded form of the holy man, and said, "He being dead yet speaketh." Ah, yes! he spoke even then to many a heart. Lessons long forgotten and unimproved, which had been uttered by those lips sealed by death, rose to the mind with an urgency and force they never had before. Years have passed away ; my childhood is gone, and the flight of time has carried me far in the race of life ; but the venerable form of that holy man is ever present as a faithful monitor, and that coffin has ever since been a silent but eloquent preacher to my soul. Blessed servant of Jesus, thou art at rest ; thy conflicts are over, and thy soul has found repose. May I be as faithful as thou hast been ; and if a mysterious but wise Providence should ordain for me as it did for thee, want, sickness, age, and the loss of friends whose graves are not dug, yea, even exclusion from the public altars of religion, may I be faithful, humble, submissive, and trustful, that with thee I may wear the crown after death has released me from the cross.

The sepulchre also holds the precious dust of the children of affliction. The physician and the minister of religion are perhaps the only persons who have any considerable knowledge of the amount of suffering and distress in human society. Their mission is often to those who are pining away in sorrow, unknown and uncared for by the masses of

men. The vocation of the minister brings him in contact with the great, the rich, and the poor, and conducts him through all the walks of humble and exalted life. He is sometimes found in the stately mansion, but oftener in the humble retreats of poverty: and sometimes he finds the rich and the great restless and unhappy when stretched upon beds of down, though under the most skilful treatment and ministered to by gentle hands. And what discontent, what murmurs often rise from those, whether rich or poor, who are seldom indisposed, and whose few days of illness are so impatiently borne, that it is a relief to all their attendants when they are again able to leave the chamber of affliction! It is not of those I would speak, as persons who look to the sepulchre as the end of their conflicts and trials: I might relate many affecting and instructive incidents which have fallen under my notice; but, as it is not my purpose to crowd these pages with any more examples than are simply sufficient to illustrate the caption of this chapter, I will introduce but one more to the reader, whose history cannot fail to engage his attention. In the commencement of my ministry I was settled among a plain but interesting people; among the first with whom I formed an acquaintance was an aged lady, who had then already been painfully afflicted for eight or nine years. I soon discovered that she was an humble child of God, and a quiet and patient sufferer. She was almost entirely helpless, and dependent upon a devoted and amiable daughter for such attentions as she might need by day and by night. She anticipated the wants of her mother, and

soothed her in her sorrows as well as she could. For the space of ten years were my visits and ministrations continued to the dwellers in that humble but delightful home. They lived in a neat little cottage which stood a short distance from the public road, almost hid by trees and covered with the ivy and the honey-suckle. Although they enjoyed the comforts of life they had not the abundance and luxuries of the rich. But there was peace and contentment; and over her frugal board that afflicted mother uttered the prayer of another — “all this, and Jesus Christ too.” To my inquiries about her health she answered meekly and with holy resignation. “My sufferings,” she would say, “are nothing compared with those which my dear Saviour endured for me. And then there are many others who have not the comforts that I have, nor this blessed Bible, nor such kind children and neighbors. And then my trials will all end, and I hope it may please the Lord to take me to heaven when he sees that it is enough; and until then he will give me grace to bear my afflictions.” Although her pains often held her waking during the night, she would add, “I can bear them a little better to-day.” And often, while her countenance was radiant with joy as we spoke of Jesus, and our pilgrimage and future home, her anguish of body would send forth involuntary groans. When conscious that she betrayed signs of distress she would check herself, and with an effort suppress the rising sigh. O! what grace was needed; and what a hold she must have had upon God, and what a large measure of the spirit of the Lamb of God, that she could be so fully resigned

to the will of heaven as she looked out for years from her cottage window upon a landscape so beautiful ; so full of life and health, and herself experience no spring-time of renewed strength. But she never murmured. There is no spot on earth which I remember with more pleasure ; none where I learned so much the value of the gospel ; and none where I saw those Christian graces, humility, patience, and resignation to the Divine will, shine with such a heavenly lustre. It was good to be there. And there was no place during my ministry among that people where I enjoyed a more sensible nearness to God, or had a richer foretaste of the blessed realities of heaven, than in that little cottage. Although none of the great of the earth visited her humble dwelling, God and his angels cheered that home with their presence. Sweet were those seasons of communion, when I broke to her the bread of life and gave her the cup of blessing ; and blessed are the memories of those occasions. After a period of incessant and painful suffering, of about twenty years, the good Lord took his servant home. A letter from her daughter, who was her faithful attendant through all her suffering, announcing her death to us, says she died “sweetly and calmly as the closing day.” Earnestly had she longed for the repose of the sepulchre, but patiently did she wait for her appointed time ; and now, delivered from her conflicts, she has passed from her twenty years of suffering into an eternity of joy. Dearly beloved one, I mourn thee as my fond and faithful friend, and rejoice with thee that thou hast overcome, and now wearest the crown of life. The book of God will show what

blessings descended upon me and my family, and upon my ministry through your prayers. For as a fountain in the wilderness unobserved sends up its vapors, which empty themselves upon the thirsty plain, so did thy prayers rise like holy and acceptable incense into the presence of Jehovah, and return in refreshing showers of grace upon the heritage of God. But thy days of weariness and thy nights of anguish are over; thy poor afflicted body shall know no more pain; thy worn and weary spirit shall no more sigh in exile from heaven.

“Calm on the bosom of thy God
 Fair spirit! rest thee now,
 Even while with us thy footsteps trode,
 His seal was on thy brow,
 Dust to its narrow house beneath,
 Soul to its place on high!
 They that have seen thy look in death,
 No more may fear to die.”

Yes, in the peaceful grave our labors, our conflicts, and trials shall all end. Up, then, ye desponding expectants of heaven! gird up your loins and be panoplied with the armor of faith, and weather the storm, for it will soon have spent itself or landed you on the bright shores of a happy eternity. Behold! even now are those clouds of dark calamity spanned by the bow of promise—they are rolling off, and eternal sunshine will soon flash around you; for a cloudless day of glory will be the inheritance of all “who wait for thy salvation, O! God.” Up, then, ye downcast under a weight of suffering, and make Christ your example and your refuge. Under the pressure of a load that would have crushed the universe, he

says, "the cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Lift up your eyes from the gloom of your chamber, the wreck of your hopes and your friendships, and say with the Master, "Father, thy will be done." For what are even twenty or more years, of keen and unceasing anguish, during which shock after shock is felt, which sends tremors of pain quivering through every fibre of our frame — and wave after wave rolls over our heads, if meekly endured, and we are "exercised thereby in righteousness;" they will be succeeded by rapturous glory. One moment in heaven will be worth a whole lifetime of affliction. And as the flowing fountain is prized most by him who comes panting from the burning desert — and food and rest are most grateful to him who has journeyed over a long and rugged path, so will the fountain of living waters be the more refreshing, and eternal rest all the sweeter to the spirit that has grown worn and weary on a long and painful road. Tempted, suffering soul, cling then to the cross, and cast the anchor of your hope fast by the throne of God, and your frail, weather-beaten bark will not only outride the storm, but finally sweep into the haven of endless peace amid the shouts and hosannahs of the redeemed.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

AT THE SEPULCHRES OF OUR DEPARTED WE
MAY LEARN THE VALUE OF LIFE.

“Life is before ye ; from the fated road
Ye cannot turn ; then take ye up the load.
Not your’s to tread, or leave the unknown way ;
Ye must go o’er it, meet ye what ye may ;
Gird up your souls within you to the deed ;
Angels and fellow-spirits bid you speed !
What though the brightness wane, the pleasure fade,
The glory dim ! oh, not of these is made
The awful life that to your trust is given,
Children of God ! Inheritors of heaven !”

O, LIFE ! thou ethereal, intangible something, what art thou ? To us thou art known only in the emblems of thy frailty. Thou art like the springing grass, “in the morning it groweth up, and in the evening it is cut down and withereth.” Thou art like the vapor which floats a moment on the wind and then vanishes into air. How shall we think and speak of thee, so that we may rightly understand thy worth ? Thou art beautiful or sad ; thou art bright or sullen ; thou art loved or loathed ; thou art on the swift wing of the dove, or travellest snail-like, just as our condition fits or disposes us to view thee in one or the other of those countless hues with

which our ever-varying state invests thee. To the wretched thou appearest as a starless night swept by storms and tempests; to the youthful and the happy thou art like a bird from paradise, scattering sweet odors from thy wings, making their path beautiful and fragrant. What shall we call thee? Thou art —

“A flower that doth with opening morn arise,
 And flourishing the day, at evening dies;
 A winged eastern blast, just skimming o'er
 The ocean's brow, and sinking on the shore;
 A fire whose crackling flames through stubble fly,
 A meteor shooting from the summer sky;
 A bowl adown the bending mountains roll'd,
 A bubble breaking, and a fable told;
 A noontide shadow, and a midnight dream,
 Are emblems which with semblance apt proclaim
 Our earthly course.”

Such imagery fitly represents the fleeting character of our present life; and yet, uncertain and transient as it is, the interests of two worlds are pressed within its limits, and all the blessings or woes which eternity has in store for the soul are gathered within the brief space of our existence in the flesh. And while a thousand incidents around us admonish us of the shortness of our stay on earth, and those high considerations which lay hold on eternal ages demonstrate to us the priceless worth of passing moments, and the ambassadors of Christ ring in our ears the words of the Master, “work while it is day, for the night cometh in which no man can work,” there is no place where we are more deeply impressed with the value of life than at the sepulchres of our departed. For here a voice, solemn and thrilling, rises from out the

stillness of that tomb in which they moulder, saying, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." It inculcates lessons of industry; and industry is essential to advancement in temporal and spiritual things. But this admonition has more particular reference to our moral preparation for another world; as if it said, whatsoever remains to be done in relation to your personal salvation, do it quickly. If repentance has been deferred, delay it no longer, for there may be but a step between thee and the grave. Smitten in our original head, the whole race is corrupt and divorced from the joys of God's favor and a holy immortality. "From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet there are wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores." The whole man, with all his faculties and powers, has been swept with the blight and desolation of moral death. There is no seed of life in the unregenerate heart; and no immortal hopes grow spontaneously in the human soul. Fallen from God and cut off from heaven, there is no help in us; for we are destitute of those resources which are absolutely necessary to make us new creatures. And unless the hand of Omnipotence lifts us out of that horrible pit into which sin has cast us, and our feet out of the miry clay of inward corruptions, and places us upon the Rock and establishes our goings, our mouth will never be filled with the new song of salvation and praise to our God. For "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." If we are

still unconverted we have yet a great work to perform, and one which it is not wise to delay a single moment. God cries to us with earnest solicitude, "To-day if you will hear my voice harden not your hearts." The duty of this preparation presses with tremendous urgency; for as death finds us we will remain through all the revolving cycles of eternity. Heaven once lost, is lost forever! And while the unseen arrows of the destroyer fly thickly and fatally around us, and our moments are on the wing, the magnitude and weight of those great interests beyond the grave surely demand immediate attention.

Withdraw not then thy mind from those considerations of the brevity and value of life which cluster around the tomb, until thy soul has bowed in deep abasement and unreserved submission to that God who holds your breath, and whose displeasure could send you this moment uncheered into the grave, and hopeless into a dread eternity. Go, kneel by the mouldering remains of your cherished ones, and there, all helpless and destitute of power to form your soul anew, look away from your feebleness unto Him "who is mighty to save, even to the uttermost, all them that come unto God through Him," and turn from all human helpers to a crucified Redeemer "who is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption." Yes, look to Calvary and fix your trust upon that crimson flood which gushes from the wounded Lamb, until a living faith forms the vital bond of union between you and the source of life and salvation, and you can rejoice in the hope of the glory

of God. For, as the Israelites in the wilderness, when stung by fiery serpents, would have perished had they looked at their wounds only, and not at the brazen serpent which Moses had elevated as the divinely ordained means of their healing, so the soul stung by sin is never restored to spiritual health until it looks away from its wounds, and its prayers and its tears, to the only hope of perishing sinners, Jesus crucified. Then, and then only will he experience the inflowings of a new life, and rejoice in a conscious renovation of his nature. And, adopting the language of Paul, he will triumphantly exclaim, "I am crucified unto the world, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith on the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me."

But if you have been begotten unto a lively hope, and your faith has placed you in fellowship with the Father and the Son, as a Christian, you have many and urgent duties to discharge, and to you does the sepulchre also say, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.* Have you a family? Then, there you have an important field to cultivate. It must be guarded from blighting and desolating winds, and kept free from all briars and thorns, that you may contemplate with joy your home as a garden ornamented with flowers, and fragrant with the odors of love. Those children are to be instructed—their minds enriched with lessons of wisdom, and their hearts peopled with kind feelings and benevolent affections. Patience, industry, prudence and perseverance must all unite in this work. The artist

who sits down to a block of marble does not, by one blow of the hammer and one touch of the chisel, cause it to leap out into the symmetrical statue which is to immortalize his name ; but months and years of application of his skill and toil are needed to give that statue a place in the cabinet, and draw around it admiring crowds. And it is not by one good lesson, but by often repeated precepts and long and laborious culture, that the character of the child is so fashioned as to charm amongst men and to be admired by angels. Patiently sits the painter to his task ; and only after many strokes of his pencil you shall behold the rough outlines of human features ; and only after many delicate touches are given does the canvass glow with the form of beauty, and look life-like and breathing. And it is only when we address ourselves to the work with the determination that we will accomplish it, even if our efforts are stretched through years, that we shall succeed in imprinting the graces of virtue upon the characters of our children. Daily instructions, accompanied with the force of an example which corresponds with our precepts, are needed to make our offspring intelligent and holy. I knew two neighbors, who, on a spring morning, obtained from a friend each a scion of a valued tree, and they both returned to their homes rejoicing. Each planted his precious shoot. But the one carelessly and unwisely placed it in a rocky soil, and after refreshing it once or twice with water, suffered it to grow as best it could. And it was not long before it drooped and died, and his labor was lost, and his hope disappointed. But the other

more wisely selected good soil by the side of a living brook, and tenderly set his plant in the ground. I saw him lay soft earth around the delicate fibres of its roots, and he gave it a support that the winds might not disturb it until it had acquired strength to stand: and it grew, and its boughs expanded, and the fowls of heaven came and made music in its branches, and it yielded pleasant fruit, and all that passed by said, behold how beautiful and good! And so have I seen a precious child, a gift from the Lord, planted in the hard and barren soil of unbelief, where no prayer softened it, where no dews of grace descended to bless and fructify; and that tender plant, tossed by the breath of sin and shaken by the storms of profanity, soon had its innocence withered and its beauty blighted, and it stood as a blasted tree without comeliness or fruit, and I wept and passed on. But I came to another, who, at the same time, had brought to him by an angel a sprig from the tree of life, and I wondered how I should find that child which he had received with trembling. And behold, he had restrained it from the way of the ungodly, and kept it from the seat of the scornful, and caused it to delight in the law of the Lord, and made the streams which gladden the city of God flow around it; and lo! it grew, and God delighted in it, and in its presence the tears of helpless orphanage forgot to flow, and widowed hearts sang around it for joy. Great indeed is the work and fearful the responsibility which devolves upon parents. A work which should be commenced even before our offspring are born, and not remitted until

they have entered heaven. It is while the rivulet warbles its faintest song that we may form its subsequent broad and peaceful current. If in its early outflows it is left to seek its own channel, it will wind its way into gloomy forests, and flow by serpents' nests and gather in their venom; or it will expand into the marsh and become a stagnant pool whose noxious vapors will breed the pestilence; or it will dash and foam over shelving rocks until its angry current is lost in the abyss of the ocean. It is thus with the life of the infant child: control it while its passions are weak, and its corruptions slumber; direct the out-goings of its soul towards God, and as it grows in stature and in spirit, "its peace will be like a river and its righteousness as the waves of the sea." Early acquaint it with its sinfulness, and gently draw upon it the moulding hand of the Saviour. In the morning of life put forth your exertions for its salvation — pray with it and for it, for it is while the clay is impressible and yielding that the potter forms his vessel. And forget not to keep your life unspotted from the world and clothed with holiness, that it may see imaged in you all the graces of lofty virtue. The pearl which reflects the colors of the rainbow also has the power of imparting this property to the white wax which is pressed firmly upon it, and in like manner has the Christian character the power of impressing the pliable nature of childhood with all the excellencies for which it is distinguished. Those who are the constant witnesses of our conduct from their earliest years, are insensibly, but so effectually assimilated to our character, that in all that

constitutes the life of the child the parent re-appears before the world. This transmission of character extends to such a degree that the manners, the bearings and intonations of voice in the offspring are readily recognized as those which were known in the parent. Parents of immortals, do we live as immortals? Are our affections, our thoughts, and our hopes manifestly tending heavenward and circling around the Eternal Throne? O! how necessary it is to make those around us feel what we profess to realize, that here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come. And not only has the Christian parent an immense work to do in training his children and household for heaven, but the work of his personal salvation, however far it may have advanced, is never complete this side of the sepulchre. "The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more until the perfect day." High as he may have ascended on the mount of excellence, there are other heights to be scaled; and the command is, onward, onward, until the glory of the earthly is blended with the glory of the heavenly.

There is a work for all to do in the vineyard of Christ. The third and the ninth hour may already be passed, and even the eleventh hour may be partly spent, while the cry of the master is still heard, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" For it is possible that, although a member of the church and a regular attendant on the ministrations of the sanctuary, and contributing to the wealth and respectability of the congregation, a man may not have added any thing to the moral weight and spiritual interests of the flock with

which he is connected. And if such be the case, he has not yet discharged those duties which rank first in importance in the life of a Christian. Your minister, the congregation, and above all your Saviour, has a right to expect, and He does demand, such a consecration of your being to His service, and such a standard of piety, that others may "take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus and learned of Him." Others should be able to perceive without the pains of a careful observation, that you are thoroughly identified with the cause and Author of Christianity. There should be such visible fruits of an operative faith as to leave no room for the shadow of a doubt as to your personal interest in the great salvation. A branch on the vine, if it retains a healthy connection with the parent stem, will be loaded with delicious fruit. It is certainly required of a disciple to establish an elevated Christian character, that he may in reality be "as a city set on a hill," and as a light shining in a dark world. His deportment and example should be of such a pure and elevated form that those younger in years may safely copy them. He should be a pattern of virtue and benevolence, that even "when the places that know him now shall know him no more forever," he may fulfil a mission of mercy by his posthumous influence; and that, when his voice no longer mingles in the songs of the earthly Zion, and others occupy the place now filled by him, he may live in their affections, and by the recollections of his devotion to the service of God, stimulate them to labors of charity and to the attainment of an exalted piety.

But, as a member of the social state, and particularly as the head of a household, the Christian should inquire whether his business is arranged in such a manner as would enable him to go to his reward without regret, and at a moment's warning. "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live," was the message which the prophet of the Lord brought to Hezekiah. Set thy house in order, we would say to all who are expectants of heaven. Have all things in a proper condition, that if death comes at a period least expected, it may find you in a waiting and prepared attitude. Very painful and melancholy consequences are sometimes witnessed in the families of those who had made no provision for a sudden departure from this world. For scarcely were their bodies consigned to the grave before strife and litigation commenced, which grew in violence until the tenderest bonds were ruptured, and a whole family thrown into anarchy, and hearts once joined in holy love were alienated from each other, and never after met but in jarrings, criminations, and recriminations. So that even the memory of a father was not pleasantly cherished; forasmuch as, through his negligence rightly to adjust his worldly affairs, the happiness of his family was destroyed. And a proper arrangement every year of that business which so many defer to the final hour, will by no means hasten your end, nor will it make you melancholy, to write your own testament while in health. And not only is it the most fitting time, while in the vigor of health, to have a care to this business, but it will leave you calmer and your mind freer from care in that

solemn hour when your spirit is to take its flight to the bosom of God ; — an hour which should not be burdened with any worldly anxieties or business, but should be emphatically an hour to die, and therefore not have the communion of the soul with God disturbed by earthly transactions. For what interest can we then feel in houses and lands, and large estates, when nothing appears momentous or great but those eternal realities which come thronging around the mind, and into which we shall then enter. O! my God, suffer not my last hour to be filled with the cares of this world, nor with the adjustment and disposal of those blessings which thou hast bestowed! Is it not enough that such a large proportion of my life has been devoted to the acquisition of wealth, or other creature goods, so that my very last moments must be offered at some other shrine than Thine? No! I will so order my life, and so command and shape my business, that when the harbingers of death commence their work of demolition upon this house of clay, that thou, blessed God, mayest fill that hour with thy gracious presence; that my soul may calmly and sweetly sink into thee, the Parent of my being, as the drop loses itself in the ocean.

Again would I ask, have you done all you purpose doing for the extension of Christ's kingdom in the earth? If not, then what you design doing, do with thy might. What interest do you feel in the great conflict which is now raging between light and darkness? Has the love of Christ not only restored you to your lost dignity, but also so elevated your conceptions and expanded the sympathies of your soul

that they rise above all those barriers of sectarianism, and have become so truly Christian and catholic as to gather within their embrace the whole family of man? Have you attained that spiritual exaltation which enables you to look over this wide world where this conflict is now progressing, that wherever you see the sacramental host of God fighting the battles of the Lord, under whatever banner, so that you see the beaming star of Bethlehem and the stripes of Calvary upon it, you can pray for and rejoice in their success? This may all be true of you; for the friends of Jesus cannot look with indifference on the present state of the world; but are not purposes maturing in your mind which would, if consummated, greatly contribute to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom? For it is scarcely presumable that any Christian who has largely shared in the benefactions of a merciful Providence, has not also determined upon an appropriation of at least a considerable amount of that which he has been permitted to acquire, to the furtherance and building up of Christ's empire on earth. And such a recognition of the divine agency in his prosperity, and such an acknowledgment of the goodness of that unseen hand which has placed him among the princes and nobles of the land, would assuredly be the legitimate offspring of a heart renewed by the Holy Ghost and animated with a Saviour's love. That there is great need for such offerings must be manifest to all who take time to consider the organized forces of evil which are every where arrayed against Christianity. Never since the advent of the Saviour have such exertions

been made, and such instrumentalities pressed into the service of the kingdom of darkness to undermine and subvert the kingdom of heaven. The enemies of the cross are besetting us on all sides, and are carrying on their warfare openly or secretly, as they may judge best suited to advance their cause. See you not what innumerable garbs they have assumed, under which to propagate their principles? Where the deformities of infidelity would shock the moral sense of a community, and repel, rather than attract the multitude to its standard, the enemy is clothed in the guise of science, and labors to bring its deductions into conflict with the revealed word of God. They have presumed to lay open to the popular gaze the immensity of the universe, and from the innumerable systems, and the magnitude of the frame-work of creation, have labored to prove that the infinite Jehovah, whose dominions are boundless, could not have any solicitude for man, who, in comparison with the orbs which people immensity, is less than an atom to the sun, and therefore beneath the notice of the Supreme Being. And hence they would infer that the scheme of redemption is a fiction; forasmuch, as it is not probable that He who is the architect of this stupendous materialism would humble himself to the condition of man. Forgetting, or designedly avoiding, what would be a paradox to their conclusions, that God, so far from being exclusively occupied with his larger creation, has given us as many and even more wonderful illustrations of his wisdom, goodness, and care, in the animated world, which lies as far beneath man as man lies

beneath the dignity of angels. For, when we attentively examine that world of life which the microscope reveals to the eye, and see that all are provided with sustenance suited to their nature, and supported in their brief existence and made happy by that same Almighty Being whose energy controls, and whose glory shines through all the universe ; and when we further consider that each one of the myriads of insects is instinct with a life of which God is the author and preserver, it would be difficult to say whether God "is greater in the world above us, or in the world beneath us." And until the advocates of infidelity can conclusively demonstrate that the sustaining power and preserving mercy of God do not extend to all things, even to the minutest objects within the wide limits of creation, their assertions have no basis on which to rest, and their deductions are without force, when they would reason out of existence the plan of redemption on the ground of man's insignificance, in comparison with the vastness of Jehovah's empire. It is, moreover, in harmony with all our conceptions of the infinite mind, that it comprehends within its notice and care, the least, as well as the greatest object within the limits of its range. They have also gone down into the bowels of the earth, and attempted to bring from its structure such proofs as should invalidate the records of creation ; so that philosophy, literature, philanthropy, and even the hallowed name of religion, all are made vehicles for the dissemination of error and of vice. No difficulties, however formidable, deter them, no labors, however arduous, are withheld from this work of cor-

ruption. Brilliant talents are prostituted to this cause, and wealth is freely poured out at the shrines of infidelity to further its unhallowed objects. They press it into all the relations of life, social, political, and religious, and, like serpents, stealthily throw their immense coils around the unsuspecting, and bind the souls of their victims with immortal woes. It would seem incredible to those who are not familiar with these efforts, upon what a formidable scale the kingdom of darkness is organized over all the civilized world. It seems as though the bottomless pit was billowing up its foulest ingredients from its deep abysses, and pouring them out in thousands of channels, blighting with desolation and death, immortal minds. The very earth groans under iniquities! All the infidel works, and licentious novels, and books professing to be scientific, are translated into all the tongues spoken by man, and offered gratuitously to those who will not purchase. I ask then, in view of these facts, can a Christian, identified as he is with all the interests of the Redeemer's cause, be indifferent to these things? Not if his heart is right with God — not if he loves his country, and is concerned to transmit to coming posterity the blessings of civil and religious freedom — not if he would be guiltless of the blood of souls in the day of reckoning. And it is gratifying to know that there are many disciples of Christ in the various departments and pursuits of human life, who are alive to their responsibilities to God and mankind, and who have not only sounded the alarm from the senate chamber, from the bench, and from the pulpit, but whose intellectual

and moral energies are consecrated to the work of the world's regeneration. There are many occupied in efforts to neutralize those demoralizing influences which are flowing through a thousand channels upon society, and to turn back to their fountain those streams of pollution which threaten to flood the land. Blessed be God, that among our statesmen there are those who cherish the Christian religion, and who regard virtue and intelligence as the only durable pillars of our Republic. Thanks to Him who disposes the hearts of men, that He has linked the minds of our most prominent citizens with all those great moral enterprises which have for their object the elevation and salvation of man. And should not every disciple of the Son of God put the solemn question to his conscience; have I done all that is required of me to advance the conquests of the cross? Am I making such a disposition of my talents, my influence, and my wealth, as will be approved in the day of judgment? Have I done all that I design doing to exalt my Saviour in the earth, and to enlarge his dominion among men? O! my soul, it was a great ransom which was paid for thee in the groans and the blood of Jesus; and is it not fit that all thy faculties should cheerfully bend to the work of saving others from guilt and ruin? Ay, is it not the highest glory and value of life to devote it to that cause which is destined to recover this world from the dominion of sin, and fill it with the knowledge of God?

It is perhaps in *your* heart, beloved reader, as it was in the heart of David, to manifest your love to God, and your grati-

tude for his mercies, by building him a temple for the worship of His name. Or you have purposed to endow some institution, and to enrich the Bible and the Missionary Societies of our land with your legacies; or you intend to relieve the congregation to which you belong of a heavy pressure which cripples its prosperity? Whatsoever it may be that you design doing, "do it with thy might," and do it quickly. In one of our large cities there lived, a few years ago, a gentleman who had been wonderfully prospered by Providence. He had amassed immense wealth, and upon retiring from the scenes of an active business life he prayerfully considered what disposition he should make of his gains. He was a man who feared God, and gratefully acknowledged his goodness by his many charities to the poor and his frequent contributions to benevolent objects. But he wisely inferred from his own history, that human nature needs discipline if it is to unfold in high-toned moral character; and while he intended to grant a liberal provision to his heirs, he did not wish to make them indolent, nor assist them in becoming degenerate by the influence of too much wealth. He accordingly resolved to appropriate a considerable portion to various benevolent purposes. The Seamen's Friend Society was to receive \$5000; a fund of \$10,000, subject to the control of a number of trustees, to be named in his will, was to assist poor mechanics to set up their business. An orphan asylum was to receive the interest of \$5000; the Bible Society was put down for \$3000; and Home and Foreign Missions each \$5000, together with a legacy of some thou-

sands to the congregation of which he was a member, and with which he had long and pleasantly worshipped. But as he was in the enjoyment of excellent health, and not far advanced in years, there seemed to be no pressing necessity for immediately concluding these bequests in a legal manner. Besides this, his wealth was increasing every day at a rate which would justify him, in a few years, in enlarging the amounts of these respective legacies, and perhaps including others in his benefactions. Months elapsed, until almost a year had expired from the time he had disclosed his purposes to a friend, and he continued in his usual health, and was cheerful and happy. One Sabbath morning he came to the sanctuary, and the pastor, with a view to improve the death of a youth who belonged to the congregation, but who had suddenly perished by the explosion of an ill-fated vessel, preached from the text — “Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” The uncertainty of life was dwelt upon at considerable length, and enforced by the sudden and sad bereavement of a large circle of friends, and the congregation of one of its members. From the uncertainty of life he drew several impressive lessons of the value of life. And the loss which individuals, the world, and the soul may sustain by delaying that which persons have solemnly determined to do, was forcibly impressed upon his audience. “Many”, said the preacher, “intend to repent, but the work is postponed from day to day for a more convenient season; and while they delay sickness comes, death comes, and they are hurried away in their

iniquities. Many purpose to discharge some Christian duty next week, or to-morrow, and behold death comes between them and the day fixed, and they go into eternity without accomplishing that which they meant to do before leaving this world." And after this manner he still further illustrated the value of life, and showed what stupendous interests frequently crowd themselves into an hour. As this gentleman was returning home from the church, he was silent and thoughtful. They had scarcely entered his house before he remarked to a friend, "That was an impressive sermon we heard to-day." "Remarkably so," replied the one addressed, "and I hope it will have a good effect upon the young." "And why," said the other, "should it not make a similar impression upon us all? Is not life equally if not more uncertain to those of us more advanced in years? I, for my part, have deeply felt the truth of what was said, and some important matters upon which my heart is fixed *shall be closed to-morrow.*" After some further remarks the conversation turned upon other topics, until the friends separated. Upon leaving, the gentleman who had been so much impressed by the discourse said to his friend, "Will you be so kind as to step in to-morrow about twelve o'clock and assist me in making some business arrangements?" "With great pleasure," replied the other, as he cordially pressed his hand and departed. The day had worn away and the family were assembled to engage in their evening devotions. The father took his accustomed seat, opened the Bible, and read the nintieth Psalm: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place

in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood—they are as a sleep in the morning; they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear; so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days in which thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea the work of our hands establish thou it.”

They kneeled down, and the solemn discourse of the morning, and the touching and beautiful picture of human frailty drawn by the Psalmist, had such an influence upon his mind as caused him to pray with unusual fervor. After warm expressions of gratitude for life and all its blessings, and imploring the divine benediction upon his word, and commending himself and family to the care of a watchful Providence, he concluded with much earnestness and emphasis in the language of the Psalm; — “And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; *and establish thou the work of our hands, yea the work of our hands establish thou it.*” It was the last prayer he ever offered at the family altar. Having retired without any apparent indisposition, all were soon locked in slumbers of sweet repose. At midnight his wife was awakened by a cold pressure upon her face: it was her husband’s hand, chilled by death. The next morning we read the following announcement in a paper: “Died suddenly, on Sunday night, at his residence, the late ——.” It is feared that the unexpected and sudden departure of this estimable citizen has deprived a number of benevolent establishments of some valuable legacies which it was his intention to leave.” These fears were sadly realized, as we have already seen that the time upon which he had fixed to give his intentions a legal form was twelve hours later than his death. What a solemn illustration does this incident furnish of the value of life! Here we have a good man whose heart was fixed for years on doing something handsome for the cause of God, and just on the eve of consummating his pur-

poses he dies, without premonition or time to make his bequests. Who can estimate the loss which those societies sustained, and those persons who would have been blest with their benevolence! What an amount of misery might not these charities have relieved! What blessings might have flown from them to the wretched and benighted! But for this delay, (which in this instance seemed without danger), thousands of Bibles would have gone out on their glorious mission — many orphans would have found a home — many comforts would have been provided for the poor seamen, and thousands of immortal spirits now sitting in the region and shadow of death might rejoice in the light of Christianity, and hereafter mingle in the song of Moses and the Lamb. What a lesson does it convey to the living! Let not death deprive you of your good intentions, while you have the power of embodying them in good deeds. O, how valuable is life! and how much remains undone forever which men intended to accomplish, just because they do not properly estimate the value, the shortness, and the uncertainty of life! And in nothing is the evil of this more frequently and sensibly felt, than with the cause of the Redeemer. A cause which should be first, but for which our benefactions are postponed to the closing scenes of life, and therefore in many instances lost to it altogether. Consult such records, or appeal to such testimony as will unfold the purposes of the departed, and you will find many painful illustrations of this truth. There is a mother who designed to consecrate her child to God in the holy ordinance of baptism, but the duty is deferred for

weeks and months, and she takes ill and dies, and that child grows up without having placed upon it the seal of the covenant, and without any bond of union with the visible kingdom of Jesus. There is a father who has long felt it his duty, and had formed the resolution to speak to his offspring about the interests of his soul, but he is suddenly cut off and the duty remains undischarged. There is a neighbor who has determined to use his personal efforts to bring another into the kingdom of Christ, but while he is waiting for more favorable opportunities, one or the other is called to his account. There was not long since a young man who had felt the operations of the Holy Spirit, and resolved to consecrate himself to the service of God. But as he had in contemplation a visit to some friends in another State, he concluded to postpone a public profession of religion until his return — “It will only be a month,” he said; but death met him on the way, and he went to the grave before the period had expired. Alas, this delaying — what purposes, what hopes are doomed to perish because men do not set a proper value upon the present hour! Were the sepulchre the goal of our existence as it is of the present life, and did it swallow up and consume all that pertains to the destiny of man, so that there would be no hereafter, then we might trifle with the golden moments that flit by us on swift wing; but —

“Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is *not* its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the *soul*.”

No, that soul is immortal, and as there is an eternal future before us, filled with raptures or woes, it becometh all to set such a value on life as to improve it, that we may be fitted for the exalted destiny of the redeemed, and unite our present vanishing existence with the blessed realities of **Life Eternal.**

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

THE SEPULCHRE PROCLAIMS THE EVIL OF SIN.

“The other shape,—

If shape it might be call'd — that shape had none,
Distinguishable in member, joint or limb;
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd;
For each seem'd either: black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head,
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand; and from his seat
The monster, moving onward, came as fast
With horrid strides; hell trembled as he strode.”

THIS sublime, but terrible, conception of sin by one of the world's most gifted poets, can scarcely be contemplated without feelings of horror. Its dreadful shadow, as it falls upon our path, fills the heart with cold sensations. And yet, ghastly and fear-inspiring as it is, its truthfulness is, alas! too painfully illustrated in the history of the universe and in human experience, to question for a moment the propriety of this representation of that malignant principle which wars against the great interests of the soul, and which is in violent conflict with all the laws of Jehovah's government. For while the genius of Milton was confessedly great, and his

imaginative powers of such a magnificent cast that all his images are of a gorgeous or gigantic character ; yet no one who has ever allowed his mind to dwell upon the manifold evils of sin, which appear even within the circle of his personal observation, will venture to affirm that this personification of it is overdrawn or too darkly shaded. Its effects are as painful as they are manifest. They are so wide-spread as to cover the earth ; so deep that they billow up in hell ; and so penetrating that they send their writhing influence through all the members and faculties of our being. The illustrious author quoted seemed conscious of his inability to find an object, even within the range swept by *his* imagination, which would fitly represent it, or give a full and life-like portrait of it ; and, therefore, he labors to combine an assemblage of the most horrible attributes, gathered from the dark and shadowy regions ; and even then are the outlines of the monster so dimly sketched, that he is obscurely seen ; while the conviction is present to the beholder that the reality is still more fearful than the picture. Alas ! what mind, though possessed of the most exalted capacities, could feel itself adequately strong and properly furnished to picture the parent of such a progeny as that with which sin has peopled our world ! It is only by a constant variation of the imagery, and by laying under tribute all the objects with which distress, pain, wo, and death are associated, that we learn a few of the many evils of sin. It is in itself an unmitigated evil, and tarnishes the glory of every thing possessed of moral excellence with which it comes in con-

tact. It is a disorganizing element, which has occasioned a sad breach in the universe of God. It casts indignity upon all the natural and moral perfections of the infinitely glorious Sovereign. It is at war with His holiness, justice and mercy; and breathes defiance against His omnipotence. It dishonors God in all his relations. As Creator it denies and comes in conflict with His right to the creatures whom He formed. As Legislator it rebels against His laws, and pours contempt upon their authority. And as the Father and Benefactor of the human family, sin has rendered His rightful subjects ungrateful, and implanted in their bosoms enmity instead of filial affection. It has introduced an element of disorder into the Divine government, and marred the glory of the universe. We behold its evil in the fall of "those angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, and who are reserved in everlasting chains under-darkness unto the judgment of the great day." What amazing ruin — what fearful desolation would appal the mind, could it glance over that world where those dwell —

"Whom the Almighty power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fires."

The ruins of a city constitute a mournful spectacle. To behold its noble palaces, its gorgeous temples, and its magnificent towers all turned into a mass of destruction, is a sight from the contemplation of which we turn with sorrow. For painful, indeed, is it to see that site, where stood in

lordly pride the finest specimens of architectural skill, covered with broken columns, partially-consumed gates, fragments of holy altars, and an air of desolation overspreading that scene of yesterday's gaiety ;—a desolation deepened by the low moans of the dying storm which kindled the conflagration, and the wail of the homeless and friendless, who linger with sad hearts around the smouldering pile which buried their all, and the mournful cooings of the mateless dove, whose brood and companion perished in the general wreck. It is a melancholy employment to contemplate the once beautiful land where shepherds guided their flocks by living streams, and where peace and beauty reigned, and an abundance of good filled all its borders, but which is now swept, and desolated, and scorched by the fire and sword of the ruthless destroyer. But no disasters, however terrible, and no calamities, however dark and withering, that have ever befallen kingdoms, or left their impress upon the fairer portions of this earth, can equal that work which sin wrought on the fields of celestial light. And, however distressing it might be to witness the desolations which mark the track of the furious hurricane, or the path of a brutal and wasting army ; it is far more affecting and painful to contemplate angelic minds in ruins— to behold those mighty intellects, once sweeping in their range of thought over the wonders of the universe, and admiring the unveiled mysteries of Jehovah, now laboring with eternal woes ; and those immense capacities which then overflowed with heaven's high raptures, now flaming with the wrath of God. Alas ! what a change from

glory to shame ; from light to darkness ; from the music of harps to that of chains ; and from exalted themes of praise to piteous groans of anguish ! And yet such are the effects which sin wrought upon those who once moved in cloudless splendor around the eternal throne, and mingled their notes with the hymns of Cherubim and Seraphim.

But it is not our province so much to meditate upon the condition of fallen angels and upon the terrors of perdition, as to look from the sepulchre over the broad earth, and set forth the evils which sin has produced, and is still producing, in the human family. No sane person has ever yet attempted to deny the vicious and corrupt state of man. Voltaire, the great enemy of all good, and particularly of Christianity, says in *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* : “ The fall of degenerate man is the foundation of the theology of all the ancient nations.” And the most distinguished sages of antiquity have uniformly recognized the *fact* of human depravity. In all the systems of religion which have been promulgated in this world, the corruption of the race in its original head has been more or less clearly set forth and acknowledged. Socrates and Plato, Pliny and Cicero, and many others of the illustrious of the distant past, have left traces in their writings of their belief in the fall of man. And that which has been in all ages painfully felt and dimly shadowed forth by those who were dependent for their knowledge on the deductions of reason, has been clearly revealed in the Bible. In that brief record in Genesis of man's first disobedience, we have a true representation of the origin of our corruption. That

history needs no vindication ; for the narrative itself is, in the judgment of every impartial and judicious critic, its best defence. It wears neither the air of romance nor the studied guise of imposture. It is characterized by great simplicity ; yet clothed with such a sublime dignity that the statement of Moses constitutes a monument of truth, around which the voluntary testimony of all ages has been poured to corroborate its declarations. For not only has humanity always felt that it was cut loose from the source of its existence, but it has been impelled by the force of internal wretchedness and desolation to make such efforts as its feeble resources would warrant, to restore its union with that invisible Power of life from which it was divorced, and through which alone man could be exalted to that state of happiness for which the soul was originally designed, and for which it incessantly yearned. And hence, all the mythologies of Egypt, of India, of Greece — yea, of all the Pagan nations, professed to furnish the means, and point out the way, in which the lost good might be recovered. And it could not be otherwise ; for the fact that a great change had taken place in the condition of the race was indisputable ; forasmuch as all men were conscious of those remains in their immortal natures which, like the broken columns of a palace, are witnesses of former greatness and grandeur now manifestly gone ; and this conviction, in connection with the existence of an evil universal in its ravages and disorders, would necessarily everywhere beget desires that would mature into efforts for freedom from the dire calamities which rested upon mankind, and the

recovery of the lost glory which clothed the inhabitants of Eden. Even now a voice cries out of the ruins of our nature, which, like unto that which seems to issue from the mouldering and wasting frame in the sepulchre, speaks to us of perished strength and faded excellence. Call it what you will, intuition or tradition, the prevailing sentiment of the human family has ever been, and is still, that man came spotless and perfect from the hands of his Maker. And this conviction harmonizes most beautifully with the utterances of the inspired volume; for it declares that "man was created in the image of God." While he remained sinless he retained the Divine image, and stood in unison with the infinite fountain of life. When he sinned, that connection was broken, that union dissolved; and his glory departed; for the cause which ruptured the bond of his alliance with heaven at the same time struck him with death. From an immortal he became a mortal; and from absolute holiness he passed into thorough depravity. And while his body was doomed to decay and destined to moulder back to the dust out of which it was formed, his intellectual and moral natures experienced the blighting and stunning effects of sin in all their faculties. It threw fetters upon the reasoning powers, so that their labor is arduous and difficult, while their deductions are often circuitous and doubtful. It perverted the judgment, so that its decisions are not made with absolute precision, but are frequently found to be fallacious. It warped and darkened the will, so that it chooses evil rather than good. It crippled the imagination, so that its flights are less adventurous, and

its offspring less glowing. It clouded and enfeebled conscience, so that, like an impotent and chained monarch still seated on the throne, its voice was no longer potent to command submission to its authority within the empire over which it reigned ; and, therefore, the once beautiful and upright being who stood at the head of creation, panoplied with the vestiture of sinless glory, was stripped of moral excellence.

But the results of his transgression did not terminate in man ; for, as he was the living and connecting link between God and this earth, thus, by the rupture of that mysterious chain which united him to the infinitely glorious Maker of all things, not only *he*, but everything which occupied an inferior position in the scale of creation, was cut off from its appropriate source of life. For not only was all the posterity of Adam struck with death in him, but all creatures, and all material things, felt the withering influence of the curse. Sin is the transgression of the law ; and when the progenitor of our race broke the law of Paradise, sin entered and passed upon all. The fountain of blessing for this world was then poisoned to its profoundest sources, and had thrown into its depths such a lasting venom, that, ever since, its streams are like unto the waters of Marah, bitter and intolerable ; and so they must remain until they have imparted to them, not the virtue of that tree from which God directed Moses to cut branches to sweeten the bitter well in the desert, but until they are impregnated by the virtue of *Him* who hung upon the tree of Calvary. The influence of sin is as comprehen-

sive as the earth, and so crushing and agonizing in its weight, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The apostle represents this whole creation, man and all that lies beneath him, as under an oppressive burden, laboring under a painful pressure, and yearning for deliverance from their bondage. The curse of God fell, therefore, upon the offender, and all things allied to him; and its paralyzing power became as diffusive and pervasive as the subtle electric fluid, and passed through the entire realm that was placed under the dominion of the lord of Eden. So that, while the laws of our physical, intellectual, and moral organizations are known to be seriously affected by it, material nature and animals have in like manner suffered from the shock to such an extent, that they, with us, still groan in anguish. Sin is that jarring element which often gives a fitful motion to the wheels of nature, and which has thrown her into such deep distress, that the woes with which her heart is laboring are expressed in the wild howl of the tempest and the thunderings of the earthquake. "Cursed be the ground for thy sake," said the Lord to Adam, "in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou

return." This narrative of that solemn interview of God with man as a sinner, clearly affirms, that the earth participated in the woes of the curse ; and it is equally just to infer, and it can be as successfully established, that the inferior animated creation lies under the same penalty. There is not the shadow of a doubt, that order, peace, and harmony reigned through the unblighted creation during the innocency of man. Enmity, strife, war, cruelty, and death were not known, for no malignant impulse was yet implanted in any creature. An air of peace and quiet, as beautiful as that which reigns in the holy depths of the midnight heavens above us, pervaded all things. No foul thought, no murderous intent, no sinful passion throbb'd within the circle of the then glorious and sinless creation. The lion and the lamb, the wolf and the kid then roamed over the fields together, fed upon the same pastures and drank at the same brooks, with as much harmony as the stars walk and shine together in the firmament above. Even the serpent, which now so universally inspires dread, was then neither an object of abhorrence nor fear ; forasmuch, as Satan accomplished his ruinous purpose by assuming the form of one of these creatures. But the effects of the fall were immediate and disastrous to the harmony and glory of Paradise. Those creatures that had yielded a cheerful submission to their constituted lord then became as rebellious as himself. The animals lost their peaceable dispositions and inherited fierce natures, so as to make them the enemies of man and hostile and destructive to each other. Milton's conception of the sudden

and sad effects of eating the forbidden fruit, may therefore be regarded as strictly true.

“Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck’d, she eat;
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of wo,
That all was lost.”

“All things,” says Dr. Chalmers, “were made subject to vanity, *i. e.* perishableness through the transgression of our first parents, at whose fall a universal blight came upon nature, and she has now become a wreck of what she was—still lovely in many of her aspects, though in sore distress—still majestic and venerable, though a venerable ruin appearing as if out of joint, and giving token by her extended deserts, and her wintry frown, and her many fierce and fitful agitations, that some mysterious ailment hath befallen her.” And it must be manifest to every careful reader that such was Paul’s conception of the wide-spread and agonizing effects of sin, when he penned the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. As all things participated in the blessings which crowned the innocency of man, and the smiles of God gladdened the whole earth, so does the Apostle include the entire work in the range of his vision, when he says, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,” and yearneth for deliverance. Based upon this fact, are his subsequent deductions of the future glorification, not only of the children of God, but of nature herself. It is not an arduous task to establish the unhappy and restless state of the human race; for evidences of this

truth are every where visible in the great variety of methods adopted by them, through which they hope to effect their deliverance from the painful pressure of those woes, of which they are conscious; but it may not be so easy to perceive this same struggling for life and deliverance from bondage in the animal and material creation. And yet, in the absence of that power needed to give intelligent expressions of what may be felt by them, there are, notwithstanding, such manifest indications of distress in all things around us, that the attentive observer needs no higher demonstration of the truth that they are laboring for enlargement and freedom. The eminent divine, Olshausen, says, "The transition of the curse from the conscious creature to the unconscious is no arbitrary one, but one of internal necessity. Accordingly as the fall even of the creature commenced with man, so does the restoration of that creature begin also with him. The notion of being subjected to vanity presupposes however naturally a germ of better life, which, bound only by an alien power, is held in bondage. But the existence of this germ of a nobler life in every creature forms the fount of its yearning for redemption." This same thought is very beautifully expressed in the subjoined language of Schubert. "Even in the things of the world of bodies which surrounds us, there is an element of life, a yearning of what is bound, which, like that Memnon statue, unconsciously makes symphony when the ray touches it from above." Goëthe, in one of his epistles, utters a similar sentiment — "When I stand all alone at night in open nature, I feel as though it were

a spirit and begged redemption of me. Often have I had the sensation as if nature, in wailing sadness, entreated something of me, so that, not to understand what she longed for cut through my very heart.”

Such feelings are not peculiar to some, but common to all contemplative minds, whose meditations rise in sublimity as they are assisted by those silent, but eloquent, utterances from the awful shrines of nature. For there is a living bond of sympathy which connects us with the outer world; so that, while we sigh over the dying brute, and feel a pang or drop a tear over the withering flower, our souls throw open their inmost sanctuary to welcome those images of beauty and lessons of instruction which come thronging, like bright spirits from the gorgeous materialism which surrounds us, to seek a home within us. And, as the unseen power of life in the leafless tree, or within the hard coating of the seed in which it is enveloped, bends all its energies to manifest itself in the blossom and the fruit, so is there a struggling in this blighted creation towards that glorification which enters so largely into the predictions of those holy Seers who have described the promised “new heavens and the new earth.” This idea runs through the whole Scriptures; and the promise of its realization at some future day lies in the anguish which now agitates all things. That period is invested with a ravishing beauty; and the effects of that renovation are graphically described by the glowing pen of Isaiah. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall

blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Pointing to that day when this alienated world shall have been recovered to its rightful Sovereign, and Jesus Christ shall have lifted off from this earth the curse which now lies upon it, he exclaims: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child upon the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." This same prophet, in the thirtieth chapter, speaks yet further of the escape from present bondage and the glorification of nature in language as lofty as it is beautiful. "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord shall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound." And in another prophecy it is announced: "And the waters of the Dead Sea shall be healed by the waters which shall flow out of the temple; and by the stream of this water shall grow all manner of trees, whose leaf shall not wither, and whose fruit shall not decay; they shall yield their fruit monthly, and the leaves thereof shall be for the healing of the heathen."

And again we have this purpose uttered from the holy oracles, "Behold I create *all things* new." And then is described to us the New Jerusalem, clothed in its ineffable splendor. It would seem, then, that all things animate and inanimate feel within them the stirrings of a new life, and shall gather upon them of the grandeurs of Calvary; and thus transformed, constitute a mirror to reflect the glory of God and the Lamb, as also the splendor of the glorified saints. Such is the picture drawn by the pencil of inspiration, of the recovered happiness and glory of that vast creation which now groans and travails with us under the curse.

And if we turn from these objects, which we have had under consideration to ourselves, and to those in a similar condition, and of a like destiny, we find the most conclusive, because consciously painful proofs of the evil of sin. For, on every part of our marvellous organization do we see the impress of a dark calamity which has been entailed upon us; and on all our faculties are fetters which sin has forged and bound upon them, while all our nerves and fibres quiver and tremble with notes of anguish. Look where you will, in civilized or savage life, to the highly cultivated or the most untutored, in the most refined circles, as also in the lowest grades of human life, and you will find man conscious of his imperfect and unhappy condition, laboring for a better state, for a higher bliss and a firmer peace than this world can give him. He is annoyed with a restlessness which admits of no quiet; oppressed with a

burden which no arm of flesh can remove, and haunted by a sense of spiritual wretchedness which neither the anxieties and pressures of a busy occupation, nor yet the excitements of company, nor the whirling fascinations of pleasure, can alleviate or displace. Deeply within the soul are stirring those insatiate desires and longings which are as deathless as the undying soul, and, like prisoners in chains maddened by their confinement, are ever beating the walls of their dungeon, that if possible they may effect a breach which will give them an exit into that immensity where alone they can range with their wonted sweep, and be satiated with their only aliment, the "fulness" of their infinite and glorious Author. All, all are under the curse—all over this wide earth come up groans and sighs from an exiled race, pining away in a bondage from which they cannot disenthral themselves. And this condition is not peculiar to the humble or the exalted, to the ignorant or the learned, but is common to all in whom burns an immortal, but fallen spirit. Mere intellectual attainments, external charities, or the rewards of philanthropy, can never answer as a substitute for that moral purity and goodness, destitute of which, the soul enjoys no pleasure. For even the inheritor of the most brilliant talents, and the possessor of the priceless wealth and glowing gems of a world's literature, after he has wandered over the ample fields of learning and culled its choicest flowers, and his eye has ranged over the wide domain of science, is still conscious of an "inward void," and needs a soul-filling object. Such has been the experience of man, and such the

tendencies and outcries of our fallen humanity in all ages of the world. They have appeared under various forms, in which, however, the hope of a future deliverance shone more or less clearly. Such were the dreams of Plato, and such the expectations of that golden age which loomed out before the vision of the ancients while they were encompassed with moral darkness. And to the same origin (that of internal wretchedness) may be traced all those modern projects and schemes which promise perfectibility to the race, or emancipation from all the miseries of their bondage, apart from and independently of the influences of the gospel. O! that those who are pursuing these phantoms, and striving to still those inward yearnings by kneeling at an earthly shrine, would turn to the Holy Word, which offers a balm for the bleeding heart, a blessing for every felt want, and which kindles in the soul of the penitent a hope that forms a channel through which the blessed realities of eternity flow, fresh and full, from the throne of God, filling all his immortal capacities unutterably full of glory. For the hope of the believer is made up of the elements of future blessedness which are inwardly present to him.

Such is the extent and severity of the curse, that even Christians who rejoice in a conscious deliverance from the guilt and dominion of sin yet groan under a weight of imperfections. Their souls are still the theatre where the powers of life war with the powers of death, and where the spirit and the flesh contend for the mastery. Their hearts are the seat of many sorrows which necessarily cling to

our present life. The believer is in a state of humiliation, and not of exaltation—he now bears the cross, but shall wear the crown. “It does not yet appear what we shall be.” But we are tending upward to Zion, “and like as the ark in the desert covered with the skins of animals had an unattractive exterior,” but underneath those rough externals there reposed the majesty and glory of Deity; thus also, within that garb of flesh which the believer wears, there lives a soul instinct with divinity that shall one day burst its casement and rise to the presence of God, and flame with a glory more refulgent than that of the sun. And as the path which Jesus trod lay through suffering to glory, we could, as his followers, desire no smoother road; forasmuch as disciples should contentedly and willingly tread in the footsteps of the Master. Therefore we are children, “and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.” The children of God should experience the weakness and decay of all earthly things, that they may not desire a “continuing city here, but seek one which is to come.” There are those whose trials are manifold, and whose life is filled up with uninterrupted weakness and pain. Poverty, sickness, and care are sometimes their portion, “for many are the afflictions of the righteous.” They are exiles who live yet at a distance from their Father’s house;—pilgrims journeying through a desert land, and sighing for that celestial home where the chosen of all ages meet. They are encompassed with evils, and may suffer reproach and persecution; for they

are sometimes neglected and hated, and are made the subjects of derision and scorn. They behold the effects of sin around them, and are in sympathy with an oppressed world. They sorrow over those loved ones who are smitten down by death. And as they lay them in the cold grave, it is with groanings for that redemption which shall place them all beyond the reach and power of the bondage of corruption.

What a mournful spectacle, what a gloomy picture, unrolls itself to the mind as we look abroad from the sepulchre over the desolations which sin has wrought! It is, indeed, an exhaustless fountain of woes. It has been flowing ever since man opened it in Paradise; and all have tasted its bitter waters. No tropic sun has been able to dry up its streams; no frozen north has chilled and bound its channels. No desert sands have swallowed them up; no mountain barriers have stayed their progress. Its dark current rolls with fearful violence over all the earth; now rising into the loftiest palace, then descending into the lowliest hut, and everywhere quenching the lamps of life. It swept a world's population into eternity, and, when re-peopled, drew upon others the devouring wrath of God. It has kept alive from age to age unholy kindling in the bosoms of earthly potentates the lust of passions, power, of gain, and of conquest, and everywhere announcing its presence in wars and bloodshed, until the chronicles of earth are burdened with crimes and woes. Ruined cities, desolated countries, and masses of unburied and bleaching human skeletons, proclaim the woes which sin has produced.

And when it does not destroy with the fire and the sword, it comes in the "pestilence which walketh in darkness, and in the destruction which wasteth at noonday;" in the famine which devours its millions, and in numberless diseases which have filled our hearts with grief, and the sepulchres of our departed with their precious forms. But for it these graves would never have been dug, and these tears never would have flowed. But for sin no death-groan would ever have startled the ear of mortals; and this globe would not have become what it now is, a vast charnel-house of corruption. It is this fearful element of ruin that has made man frail as the leaf; that has poisoned the air we breathe, and the water we drink, so that disease rises out of fountains, floats upon the winds, and meets us at every step in the journey of life. Ay, it is this parent of all wo whose existence we have cause to deplore. For all the physical evils to which man is heir—all the social evils which afflict society—all the moral deformities which mar and distort humanity—and all the distresses which throw the heart of the vast organism of creation into such anguish as to send its throbbing woes through its immense channels—all these are the fruits of sin. Blinded by its influence, we have only a very partial knowledge of its loathsome character. Could we see it as God sees it, and know its work as He knows it, sin would indeed be a monster of frightful aspect. But we see, and know, and feel enough of its blighting power. The many desolate hearths, the faded Edens, and multitudes of weeping and breaking hearts around us, proclaim its destructive

character. Could we collect the anguish, the tears, and disappointed hopes with which it has filled the world, we would shrink appalled from the spectacle. And since it gives birth to all secret sorrows and all public calamities, and has made it necessary for the Holy One to assume our nature that He might atone for our guilt, and even now inflicts fresh wounds in every transgression on the Son of God, while it excites our fears by peopling eternity with alarming torments, shuts up heaven and thrusts down to hell, should we cherish it? Nay, let us loathe it; let us flee and renounce it, and bear none but its necessary evils, and soften these with the balm of life. Let us not suffer it to enslave us in debasing bondage, or bring us to an unholy grave and an undone eternity; for if this world, in its ameliorated state by the influences of the work of redemption, still groans, what must be the weight of damnation? If the curse of sin wrings cries of anguish from a laboring creation, with what crushing force will not the curse of final rejection fall upon the unhappy sinner! Can thy heart be strong and thy soul endure the weight of eternal woes? O, God! draw us, that we may hasten to Thee for refuge, for peace, and for hope. For within the embraces of thy love we find our true felicity; and with Thy presence to cheer us, we will press forward through this vale of tears, until our bodies find repose in the grave, and our souls rest in heaven.

“There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest;
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.”

O, my God! Thou art merciful, and faithful, and true. Thou hast given this world to Thy Son. He has purchased it by the wealth of His priceless suffering, by His blood, and the offering of His soul. Hasten, then, His universal reign, and the complete redemption of this earth. O, Thou insulted Sovereign! pity Thy fallen creation. Dry up the fountains of sin; command its desolating streams back to the abysses of hell, and there bind them in eternal fetters. Stay the footsteps of the destroyer; break his terrible spell, and overturn the throne of Iniquity. Multiply and encourage the good; fill with Thy wisdom and omnipotence all their schemes of mercy, that Thou mayest be recognized as moving in these, that the earth may tremble beneath Thy tread, and thrones and kingdoms melt away before Thy purposes, until the shout of final and complete conquest is rolled around the globe, and ascends and mingles with the notes of the numberless multitude, pealing with the voice of ten thousand thunders through the universe, "Hallelujah! for the kingdoms of the earth have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."

O! let the cries of our afflicted, yearning humanity pierce Thy heavens, Almighty Father, and join their petitions with those of atoning blood, and bring peace and deliverance to its anguished heart. Yes, hasten the world's redemption! Dawn, O dawn! thy day of glory! that the groanings of this travailing creation may be changed into songs of deliverance and everlasting praise.

CHAPTER NINTH.

THE SEPULCHRES OF OUR DEPARTED ADMONISH
US TO BE GENTLE AND KIND TO THE LIVING.

“Be kind to each other through weal and through wo,
For there’s many a sorrow for hearts here below ;
The storms of this life beat around us in vain,
If we’re kind to each other in pleasure and pain.”

BEAUTIFUL is the twinkling star that lonely shines far out in the firmament of a dark night, and charming that flower which blooms amid the wide-spread waste of desert sands. In the eyes of the observer the brilliancy of the one is augmented by the darkness which surrounds it; and the loveliness of the other enhanced by the absence of all things else fitted to produce delight. And thus, also, in this world of clashing schemes and jarring interests, of disappointments and sorrows, of blighted hopes and broken hearts, there is nothing which more successfully relieves the gloom and softens the woes of life than kindness. That star in the canopy of heaven is not so beautiful, nor is that lone flower in that arid scene so lovely, as a gentle spirit. A spirit that glows with goodness, thrills in all its fibres with kind intentions, and is ever animated with purposes of mercy, is the first-

born of holy love. It is born from heaven, and is attired and sent on its mission by Him who is love. Behold how it moves about with cherub wings, dropping upon the desert spots of life those kindnesses and blessings which, like fragrant flowers, exhale their aroma on the air we breathe. It is a bright visitant to dark and desolate homes, mingling its tears with wretchedness, illumining the despairing and desponding with smiles of pity, and breathing into downcast hearts the energies of hope. May this celestial spirit find a home in every bosom, that we may with its gentle influence smooth for each other the asperities of life.

Many are the blessings of social life and rich and varied are its enjoyments, but it has also its trials, and its joys are often embittered by disappointments and crosses. A friend is unfaithful, the family is afflicted, some unkind gossip reaches our ear and chafes our spirit, or envy shoots a dart to wound our reputation. Vexations and annoyances in one form or another meet us at every step and turn in life, so that no palace nor cottage, no home nor heart may be found, where the cares that befall us do not make a portion of our life a weariness. And O, how reviving to the tried and afflicted is the solace which a gentle spirit imparts; and how soothing to an anguished mind are words of kindness from a friend! If the world is dark with frowns, and we tread a thorny road, we regard none of these, so that a few kind hearts beat around us, and a few gentle spirits bless us with their ministrations. Human nature is susceptible of high cultivation; but whatever excellencies it may possess, among all its visible

virtues, there are none which adorn it with a lovelier aspect than gentleness and kindness. These shed a lustre over all other traits and invest the whole character with attractive charms ; for, wherever found, they impart grace and beauty. Acts of kindness are the offspring of a gentle spirit. They are seeds of blessing which have always rewarded the sower with an abundant harvest. There are many sources from which we may learn the value of gentleness and kindness, and there are numerous and weighty considerations which might be urged for their cultivation. They are clothed with an excellence which must commend them to our understandings, and which never fails to win our hearts. What are the objects which we most admire in the world around us? Assuredly those things which are clothed with an air of gentleness. The unchained hurricane may inspire feelings of terror as the eye runs along the desolations that mark its track ; but it is the soft breeze, which soothes the fevered invalid and sustains the man of toil, that we love. The traveller, oppressed by a burning sun, and toiling his slow progress through hot sands, dreads the simoom ; but is gladdened and refreshed, while his soul swells with emotions of delight, as the gentle zephyr fans him, as with angel wings, while he reposes in the shadow of a great rock. There is a wild grandeur in the dashing and foaming torrent : as if incensed by the obstruction it meets in those rocky barriers over which its course leads, it leaps angrily onward until it falls over the frightful precipice in broken masses ; but it is only beautiful when those waters pass out from that whirl-

pool and form themselves into a river that flows quietly and placidly from that scene of confusion, and winds through smiling valleys reflecting the glory of the setting sun, and adding to the tranquillity which reigns at evening over the landscape. It is when the war of elements is hushed, and the tempest has rolled off its dark chariots, and the lightnings on the distant horizon are flashing their retreat, that we contemplate with pleasure the spangled heavens. The starry firmament in the midnight stillness, when the music of the spheres charms the ear of the spirit, causes our thoughts and aspirations to rise on angel wings to yonder fields of light, and carries our affections within that world of glory where sits enthroned the infinite Ruler of the universe; and the soul mingles in the sublime worship above, and bends in profound adoration with the innumerable throng around the throne of eternal love. It is the quiet landscape on which the light of day gradually melts away into the twilight; when the bleating of lambs, and the lowing of kine, are dying upon the air; and all the noises of a restless world are blending into the repose of evening; and the gentle brook warbles its lonely and plaintive notes; it is then that the scene kindles within us the sweetest emotions, because in unison with the rest of this laboring world. It is the gentleness which characterizes the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and the silent but mighty operations of nature, which impart to them their loftiest grandeur and highest glory. It is not nature in war, but nature in repose, that we love. There is gentleness in the descending sunbeam and in the falling shower. Softly does

the dew distil upon the earth, and silently is the work of those laws accomplished which robe the forest in its foliage, and the field in its harvests. And within the social circle we are most frequently and irresistibly drawn into the society of those of our associates and friends who are of a meek and quiet spirit; and for a long and prosperous friendship none are so well qualified to crown it with blessings; forasmuch as kindness and gentleness are jewels which change and age do not dim. And while we cheerfully yield our admiration to the objects in which they are found, there are numberless reasons which should induce us to labor for their possession. Behold that mother whose life is characterized by gentleness! what an air of peace she sheds over the family circle. Its moulding power is felt by the spirit of her husband; the stern and severe features of his character are softened, and his mind acts with a new force in all the walks of business. And upon the pliable nature of her children the image of her lovely spirit forms itself, and shows all its interesting features in their looks, language, and behaviour; and the whole family becomes noted for its amiability; for all their actions are cast in the same mould of kindness.

But it is time to inquire as to the manner in which the sepulchre becomes a teacher of gentleness and kindness. There is perhaps no instructor that can so impressively set forth their value, and none in whose presence we feel so sensibly the importance of such a course of conduct towards our brethren of mankind, that, when they leave this world,

we have nothing of harshness towards them with which to reproach ourselves. O! what unavailing regrets are sometimes uttered over the dead, and what burning tears and lamentations are sometimes poured around their tombs! Memory is never more active nor more faithful in calling up past events, than at the graves of our cherished ones. All that we have ever done, or said, to grieve or afflict a parent, a friend, or a child, will start up before the mind like a frightful and accusing spectre. Even intended wrongs, which were never consummated, are remembered with bitterness of heart. Bitter are the tears, and touchingly painful the grief of that youth, whose waywardness pierced the heart of an affectionate parent, "and brought his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." It was with a vile hand that he broke those golden cords by which a mother's efforts and a mother's prayers had bound his infant soul to virtue; and, contrary to her example, and in opposition to her instructions, he threw the pearl of price into the dust. Or it may have been a companion, a friend, or a child, to whom a mysterious Providence appointed a painful and protracted affliction, and designed you as the kind attendant and ministering spirit of that declining one. In such an office human nature soon grows weary and impatient of its confinement to the functions of those who nurse the afflicted; and if, as it frequently happens, the patient becomes restless and peevish under his multiform sufferings, he may increase the annoyance of the attendant, until it manifests itself in a weary look, and in marked reluctance in the discharge of his

duty. As an illustration, I may here give the history of a young lady who detailed her own experience in such a case to a friend, from whom she sought comfort. Her mother was called to pass through a long and painful affliction before she died. The daughter was remarkably kind and affectionate, and by day and by night ministered to her wants. The slightest cough or groan of her mother would awaken her, and instantly bring her to the couch of her sick parent. But, wearied with long watchings, her own health gave way, and she permitted thoughts of her hard condition to rise and strengthen in her mind, until they assailed and overthrew her patience. She had laid down to find relief in sleep from the feelings which clouded her heart; and shortly after, having fallen into a troubled slumber, the voice of the afflicted one faintly called for a glass of water. She felt irritated as she rose; and, although she uttered not a word, her looks betrayed her feelings as the light shone fully in her face; and the feelings depicted in that countenance put gall and wormwood into that cup of water, and crushed the heart that fondly loved her—and it stood pulseless that moment. The revulsion of that daughter's feelings was sudden and terrible, while it swept with desolating power over her soul. In vain she sobbed and shrieked; in vain did she chafe those icy hands; in vain she bathed those cold temples with her hot tears. "O!" she cried, "for one word of pardon—O! for one forgiving look from my dear mother!" but those lips were sealed in death, and those eyes were closed forever. "O! sir," she said to the friend to whom she related the

incident, "this sorrow has reached through all my life. The memory of that hour throws its dark shadow over every bright scene, and casts its bitter ingredients into all the streams of my comfort. Years have passed away; but that unkind look which broke my mother's heart rankles as a thorn in my soul, and will cause my heart to bleed until I obtain her forgiveness in heaven."

A favorite writer, whose every intellectual offspring glows and dazzles, holds the following language in reference to the grave: "Who can look down upon the grave even of an enemy, and not feel a compunctious throb that ever he should have warred with the poor handful of earth that lies mouldering before him!" "But the grave of those we loved — what a place for meditation!" "Ay, go to the grave of buried love, and meditate! There settle the accounts with thy conscience for every past benefit unrequited, every past endearment unregarded, of that departed being who can never, never return to be soothed by thy contrition."

Some years ago I knew a beautiful young lady, who was delicately reared and warmly cherished by a highly respectable circle of affectionate friends. She was gifted with rare intellectual powers, with refined sensibilities, and these crowned with that charming amiability which a gentle spirit imparts to a lofty soul; and all were canopied by a person of extraordinary beauty. Like a delicate flower that blooms and exhales its fragrance upon the air under the wooing influences of a sunny clime, and that would shrink instinctively and wither from the first breath of cold, so was

my young friend brilliant and beautiful, but so tender that a frowning look would bathe her in tears. She was amiable and confiding as a child. Open in her manners, ardent and innocent in her feelings, no dark suspicion of the integrity of others entered her soul. And, thus constituted, she measured others by her own guileless nature, and believed them to be upright and true as herself; and having never been deceived, she thought the intentions of her suitor were as holy as those which reposed in her own bosom. She was wooed and won by a man of some talent, yet her inferior in intellectual strength, and supremely selfish; who but plucked the lovely flower from the parent stem, then cast it aside to wither. Passionately did she love him; and fondly did the tendrils of her affections twine around the spirit of him who should have been to her what the oak is to the vine, a shelter from the heat, and a support in the storm. But a nature so gross as his was ill adapted to one of fine texture; neither was he capable of appreciating a creature so lovely; and he grew cold and selfish — his looks, words, and actions became harshly repulsive, and fell like mildew upon her heart, so that, instead of being attracted by kindness, she shrank under his scowl like a timid fawn. She received not those little attentions and approving smiles which are the dew and sunshine to the soul of a loving wife. She was seldom seen in those little gatherings where the husband was found; and when she walked, it was alone and without the strong staff upon which she had leaned, but which had pierced her heart. And yet she was meek and uncomplaining; no

reproachful look nor unkind word escaped her; “but like the pierced dove which hides her wounds with her snowy wings,” so did she conceal her heart-sorrow from all but a few friends. She knew that the blow which shattered her heart must soon terminate her sorrows; and here was her only comfort — the hope of deliverance from this bondage. She had a mother and Saviour in heaven, and she knew that they loved her; and there too, perhaps, might he whom she still adored, but under whose neglect she was pining away, be possessed of a gentler nature. The Lord, to whom alone she told *all* her sorrows, had pity upon her, and in the plenitude of His compassion, sent an angel to break her fetters and set the fair prisoner free. A few months’ work of a gentle disease “broke the golden bowl, and loosened the silver chord, and broke the pitcher at the fountain. Her death was gentle and beautiful as her life had been; and the transactions of that parting scene were fraught with keen anguish to the heart that had deceived her. And how must the recollection of those wrongs which blighted one of the fairest daughters of earth oppress the mind of her betrayer, if there still lingers within it some measure of sensibility! Who would, for ten thousand worlds, have those dark reflections which must throng around his brain, and crawl like scorpions and stinging adders around his conscience in the midnight hour — that hour during which a mysterious Power so often brings about a resurrection of our sins, and places them as accusers before the mind! Would that we could believe this to be an isolated case! but, could we see what

the eye above us sees, alas! how many would we behold withering like delicate flowers under intentional or unintentional neglect on the part of those who have vowed to cherish and love them! And, oh! if there be a crime which more especially merits the frown of heaven and the reprobation of mankind than other wrongs, it is that of harshness and unkindness to a sensitive and gentle wife. My soul has no compassion, much less respect, for one who is so brutal in his feelings, and so debased in his nature, as to enable him, by scowls and reproachful words to send from his presence the heart that idolizes him, trembling with fear and bleeding with anguish. A woman of fine sensibilities and quick perceptions is always uncomplaining, even when she feels all this; for such is the weight of her wrongs that they find expression only in secret tears, while they form that deep sorrow which settles with all the fixedness and gloom of despair upon her soul. And even when thrown within the excitements of the gay circle, and she participates in social amusements, there is a tinge of sadness in her eye, and a languor in her smile, that reveal a deeply-seated heart-sorrow. It is a dictate of wisdom, if nothing more, to shun the oppressor of woman, and to beware of him as we would of the wily serpent. If we have lost friends whose graves are not yet dug, and who once lived within our inmost heart, but who most of all others abused our confidence and outraged our feelings, we would certainly reckon as first those who tyrannized over a delicate woman and crushed a gentle spirit by unkindness; for we hold it to be an incontrovertible

truth that the heart that is false in the home circle, and while it throbs against a bosom of purity, is false everywhere else. But we hope that there are few such instances, in comparison with the many who know how to illumine their homes with kindness, and under whose fostering care the souls of those gentle beings with whose destiny their own and that of their children is linked, are light and joyous, and pour forth from those exhaustless fountains of woman's affection that wealth of love which strengthens and beautifies the nature of man, animates him with unconquerable energy for the race of life, gives birth to high resolves, and fills his soul with that quiet, deep, and abiding happiness which no other object except a gentle and beautiful wife can bestow outside of heaven. And all those who can appreciate her worth, and are cheered by her presence, and sustained by the energy of her love, will respond to the sentiment as though it were uttered out of their own hearts, that is so happily and elegantly expressed by a gifted poet:—

“Feel'st thou no joy, no quiet happiness,
No soothing sense of satisfaction, in
Loving and being loved? Is there no weight
Removed from the heart, in knowing there is one
To share all, to bear all with thee? To soothe grief,
Yea, to soften away its human pain
By a superior love, the cup to temper
With words of consolation and sweet hope,
That even its very bitterness shall seem sweet,
Forgotten in the love that offers it!”

As another illustration of the painful regrets which are

sometimes induced by the consciousness of having acted unkindly towards those who are near and dear to us, I may mention some incidents in the life of a young man with whom I am personally acquainted, and who has not yet forgiven himself for acting in opposition to the expressed wishes of honored parents. He was the youngest of an ancient and excellent family, and as fondly cherished by an aged father and mother, as Jacob loved Joseph. But in common with other young men who have been reared in fashionable life, and in affluent circumstances, he felt those stirrings for adventure and distinction within him which invariably beget that restlessness of spirit which so frequently issues in a wandering life. As these fires were slowly burning and occasionally flashing forth in expressions of hope for enlargement, they were suddenly fanned into irrepressible power by the adventures and reported successes of those who had abandoned their homes and gone to the golden land. He became restive under the family restraints, and impatient under the gentle rule of a worthy, but indulgent father. He longed for a larger freedom, and a more untrammelled independence. The venerable patriarch expostulated with his son, when he uttered his determination to go to the far-off land. He drew a vivid picture of the privations and sufferings which those had endured whose bones were then bleaching somewhere in the pathless wilds, where they had fallen while on their way to the country whither he wished to go; and the perils of body and of soul to which he would be exposed, away from the influences of the sanctuary and the

pleasant restraints of home. He begged him to consider the pain he would occasion to them all if he persisted in his determination to sunder those ties which bound him to those who gave him birth. And, softening as he proceeded, he continued, "My son, why not settle down upon your farm, and live near your brothers and sisters, so that when you are sick we may be near to comfort you, or in distress we may have the power to minister to your wants. Look upon me and your mother—we have travelled far in the race of life, the infirmities of age are fast gathering upon us, and our pilgrimage is drawing to a close. Leave us not to go down into the valley of death unattended by you. O! permit our eyes to rest their last look upon you, the child of our old age. At least, wait until we shall sleep with our fathers, before you carry your purpose into effect." But the sunny land, with its rivers flowing with the sparkling dust, was continually floating before his excited vision, and charmed his heart away. He had heard of the ample treasures which men amassed in a few days; and in his dreams by night he saw the brilliant ore spread out at his feet and waiting his appropriation of it. His imagination threw its bewitching charms around the pomp, splendor, and honor which large wealth can purchase; and the future rose before his mind clothed in the most gorgeous hues, till he resolved to break away from every consideration which had been urged, and go in pursuit of the coveted good. And he did go; neither the remonstrances nor tears of his parents, and a large circle of friends, could detain him. He dashed every tender

recollection from his mind, quieted his heart to every mis-giving, and nerved his soul to brave every form of danger that lay between him and the object he loved. Wearily and sadly did those aged ones spend the evening of their life. And often through the watches of the night there would break forth from their pillow; — “O! my son, my son — O! my God, bring back our child.” Others, kind and faithful, strove to comfort them; but their thoughts seemed to wander continually after the absent one. The time of their departure arrived, but he was not there to receive their blessing; and their dying breath was spent in supplications to the good Shepherd that He might fold their straying lamb. The officiating clergyman, at the funeral of the father, begged a covenant-keeping God to remember the absent son, and to bless this dispensation of Providence to his soul; and many other hearts were laboring with heaven for the young man’s salvation; and He who has respect to “the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous,” heard those petitions and reclaimed that son.

It was after a hard day’s toil, on the evening of the day on which his father was buried, that that young man threw himself beneath a branching tree to repose for the night. While his eyes looked up through a quiet sky, and peered into the starlight firmament above, suddenly there flashed upon his memory a remark which his distant father had made to him when a little boy, and which had been long forgotten until recalled that moment. One evening as they were sitting in the open air the son innocently asked, “Father, how can the stars shine every night?” He said, “My son, God gives

them light; and, if you are a good boy, you will one day become more beautiful and bright than yonder stars." The recollection of this incident started a train of reflections which gathered within their range the endearments of home, his fond parents, and his own ingratitude and disobedience; and his heart smote him, and all the desolation and gloom of a guilty soul came upon him, so that he wrestled alone with God in prayer until the dawn of a new day was breaking upon the world, when also the light of a reconciled Saviour's countenance broke upon his soul, and he leaped from the earth with the first exclamations of his new-born spirit; "My father! my mother! I will fly to their feet!" And he did fly. Having hastily made the necessary preparations, he started for home. But, alas for our young friend, on the very day of his arrival, and only a few hours previous to his return, the last parent had been committed to the grave. As he rushed into the ancient mansion, the weeping and sobbing circle of brothers and sisters told him that he was too late. Where is my father? my mother? not dead? They could only point to the village graveyard, where they had laid them. And to their graves he flew, and there, prostrate on their newly-made sepulchres, he poured forth most touching and piteous lamentations. "O! that these ashes might speak a forgiving word! O! that they knew that their disobedient son weeps tears of penitence upon their graves!" And although he has been eminently successful in his efforts to acquire wealth, and enjoys the confidence and esteem of a large circle of friends, his unkindness to those who so fondly

cherished him, has tinged with a melancholy gloom all his possessions, and imprinted on his brow a sadness so deep, that no sunlight of earthly prosperity will ever drive it away. These sketches, drawn from incidents in real life, may suffice to show the importance of a gentle and kind behaviour towards all with whom we mingle, and with whom we are associated in the various relations of life.

Should these pages fall under the eye of a youth who has broken through all those tender ties and affectionate endearments of home, and gone out upon a wild and sinful career, and for whom a sorrowing parent still mourns and prays, let me affectionately urge him to hasten to the feet of that long-neglected and injured parent, and seek forgiveness, and amend his life; for the curse of heaven rests with withering power upon filial disobedience. Whatever parents may endure in the shape of painful calamities, nothing is so crushing and desolating as the conviction that all their anxieties and labors for a beloved child are unrequited; while it is the extreme of baseness to despise their warnings, and pour contempt upon their instructions; for this is to trample on their hearts and then mock their pain. Or if my reader is a daughter that was undutiful, or a husband or a wife that was unfaithful, let them remember that every wrong inflicted upon a human being carries within it a reciprocal force, which becomes the more terrible the longer it is in striking with its reacting power the heart from which it sprung; and let them hasten to the bleeding spirit of the injured one, and soothe it with tears of repentance. For it is far better that such

should submit to the most humiliating confessions, than permit the opportunity of seeking pardon to pass away, and utter their fruitless regrets over the dust of the injured.

But in giving a more positive form to the discussion of this subject, I will yet add, that this lesson of kindness to the living which the sepulchre suggests is abundantly enforced, and its importance successfully established, by the intimations of Providence, the example of Jesus, and the expressed declarations of Heaven. It is the dictate of wisdom always to consult the teachings of Providence, and to copy from the examples of its honored instruments. And the high estimation in which God holds such a disposition may be inferred from the fact that the most distinguished persons that ever lived, and who were sent by Him upon the most difficult and important missions into our world, were remarkable for their gentleness. Moses, the illustrious leader and lawgiver of the Hebrews, was noted for his quiet spirit. How calmly and majestically does he stand out to our view on those occasions when encompassed by a heated and clamorous multitude, whose insults and reproaches were poured upon his head! How great is his forbearance and meekness, while he listens to their complaints and unreasonable demands! With what ardent affection must his heart have yearned over that ungrateful people, when he appealed so touchingly to Jehovah to spare them, and rather blot him from existence than not preserve that nation which was the ordained instrumentality through which the great purposes of Divine mercy were to be unfolded, and the constituted channel through which the blessings of redemption were to flow out upon a lost world!

Our blessed Saviour, also, was gentle and kind. Everything connected with His incarnation, His life, His death, and ascension to heaven, wears an aspect of gentleness. The King of Kings, whose advent might have been made under the most imposing circumstances, with millions of angels, all dazzling with light, and heralding his descent to our earth came gently ; not with the pomp and grandeur of universal empire didst Thou come, adorable Redeemer !

“Thou wast born of woman ; thou didst come
 O Holiest ! to this world of sin and gloom,
 Not in thy dread omnipotent array ;
 And not by thunder strow'd
 Was thy tempestuous road ;
 Nor indignation burned before thee on thy way.
 But thee a soft and naked child,
 Thy mother undefiled,
 In the rude manger laid to rest
 From off her virgin breast.
 The heavens were not commanded to prepare
 A gorgeous canopy of golden air,
 Nor stoop'd their lamps th' enthroned fires on high ;
 A single silent star
 Came wand'ring from afar,
 Gliding uncheck'd and calm along the liquid sky ;
 The Eastern sages leading on,
 As at a kingly throne,
 To lay their gold and odors sweet
 Before thy infant feet.
 And when thou didst arise, thou didst not stand
 With devastation in thy red right hand,
 Plaguing the guilty city's murtherous crew ;
 But thou didst haste to meet
 Thy mother's coming feet,
 And bear the words of peace unto the faithful few ;
 Then calmly, slowly, didst thou rise
 Into thy native skies ;
 Thy human form dissolved on high,
 In its own radiancy.”

From the period of his birth to the startling scenes of crucifixion—from Bethlehem to Calvary—we have exhibited for our admiration a life of unbroken gentleness. His whole career was so beautiful with goodness, so replete with all that commands the homage of the mind, so sublime and unearthly, that the skeptical Rousseau, after he had finished reading the Saviour's life, uttered these memorable words: "Can he who is the subject of this history be himself a mere man? Was his the tone of an enthusiast, or an ambitious sectary? What sweetness! What purity in his manners! What an affecting gracefulness in his instructions! What sublimity in his maxims! What wisdom in his discourses! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live, suffer, and die without weakness and without ostentation! If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

That God highly values these traits in the character of his children is manifest from the many admonitions in his Word to be meek, courteous, gentle, and kind. Christians are exhorted to walk "with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another; tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

And the law of Christ is a law of love or kindness. The Lord has also given many gracious promises to those who cultivate such a spirit. "He will beautify the meek with salvation." "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." These exhortations might be multiplied to almost any extent, clearly showing what the Apostle Paul declares, "That a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God an ornament of great price."

And if there were no commands or laws in the Holy Word bearing on this subject, the influence of kindness is so obviously blessed, as to teach all men the importance of its uniform practice. The person who deals gently with all who come within the circle of his friendship, is amply compensated in the happiness he derives from making others happy. The sentiment in that popular song—"Be kind to the loved ones at home," is as just as it is beautiful. And never do we feel it so impressively, as when one of those "loved ones" is removed by death, and we are called to follow his remains to the silent grave. There by the sepulchre we shall rejoice even in our sorrow, if the testimony of our conscience assures us that we have faithfully and kindly discharged the offices of friendship and affection towards the departed. It will be an exercise that richly repays, often to examine our conduct amid the endearing relations of home, in the light of that solemn hour when all earthly ties shall be sundered; and to order all our actions in sight of the open grave whither we, and those around us, are going; that, to the distress which

will then wring our hearts, there may not be added the bitterest of all reflections, that we wounded by unkindness the friend we mourn. In all the relations of life should we strive to exhibit a quiet disposition and a kind bearing towards our fellow-creatures. In the family, every heart should throb with kindness. The domestic circle may sometimes become a scene of trials and sufferings. Afflictions and misfortunes may fall upon us, or overtake those we love, and obscure our prospects; but however painful such visitations are, they are never intolerable while the light of gentle spirits illumines the home. And if some member of the household is smitten with a painful malady, which is slowly consuming his strength, and working its way onward to the citadel of life, while it induces a complaining disposition or fretfulness of spirit in the sufferer, still it is our duty to bear with him patiently, and to minister with cheerfulness to his increasing wants. And if days and nights wear heavily away in our watchings by the sick-bed, yet should we betray no impatience; for it will be a precious consolation when weeping over the lifeless form, to know that we fondly cherished him to the last.

The same spirit should accompany us into all the other walks of social beings. And as gentleness diffuses itself over society, it will displace suspicion and distrust, those canker-worms that sap the life and purity of communities where they exist, while it restores and strengthens confidence between men. It is also closely allied to a spirit of disinterested benevolence, and therefore raises man above the narrow

enclosures of sectionalism and sectarianism, and prompts him to such actions as will diffuse their blessings far and wide. And such a disposition will incline us to treat tenderly those unfortunate poor, who call at our doors for a morsel of bread, or a little pecuniary aid. If you would be "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame;" if the widow and the orphan are to find a valuable friend in you, sympathy must accompany your beneficence to them. If you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and distribute to the necessities of the unfortunate, do it kindly. Let them see that it gives you pleasure to befriend them; and the value of your charity will be greatly enhanced. Believe it, a charity bestowed with an air of gentleness, and with words of encouragement and of hope, will be doubly blessed. Your kind words and pleasant looks may call into play feelings to which they have long been strangers; for they are mostly received coldly, and sent away abruptly, as if their presence could not long be endured; so that even the little which they receive does not lighten their burden; because they discovered nothing in their benefactors to assure them that they are in unison with sympathising hearts, and therefore their weary and worn spirits are not soothed. Be kind to those who differ from you in opinion and in faith. Others enjoy the same right of opinion which we claim for ourselves. They may be as good, perhaps far better in the sight of God, than those who would pronounce harsh judgment upon them. Let not angry words or harsh feelings chill the glow of love, or quench the flame of friendship. Suffer not selfishness to drive your mind

and heart from others, but unite them to thyself by bonds of intellectual and moral affinity. As a Christian, make manifest in your life the spirit and principles of Him who loved those who hated Him, and who, even amid the throes of his agony upon the cross, uttered the unearthly prayer—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." A gentle life will be followed by a gentle death. For he that has "ruled his spirit," and delighted in peace, shall pass away softly as the drop mingles back into the ocean, and quietly as the beam melts away into the glory of perfect day.

"Be kind to each other in sorrow and grief,
'Tis *sympathy* only can give thee relief,
Dividing our sorrow, but lessens our pain,
Be kind to each other — affliction is vain.
Be kind to each other when sickness has come,
Let nothing but smiles ever visit your home ;
Encourage and succor, and soothe the distressed,
Be kind to each other and still thou art blest.
Be kind to each other through life to its close,
And when thou art freed from its wishes and woes,
When freed from life's tears, from its sorrows and sighs,
Be kind to each other and meet in the skies."

As one who, in common with others has been wounded, it may be, by erring shafts from the quiver of friendship, or arrows shot by the spirit of envy and detraction, I deem it not inappropriate here to say, that they are all buried so deeply, that no resurrection awaits them on earth, and so softened by the dews of forgiveness, that they may moulder into the dust of oblivion before the judgment-day. And at peace as I humbly trust with God and man, I mean so to live, that the monument which I may build, whether lowly or

lofty, shall be composed of the jasper, the chrysolite, the topaz and amethyst brought from the Gospel's mine, and the top-stone quarried from the mount of Calvary — a polished block of Christian love, inscribed with the prayer of my Lord, that trembled from his death-quivering lips — “Father forgive them, for they knew not what they did?”

CHAPTER TENTH.

POSTHUMOUS FAME—THE SEPULCHRE INSTRUCTS US
HOW TO LIVE, SO AS TO BE REMEMBERED WHEN
DEAD.

“Lives of the great and good remind us,
We can make our lives sublime ;
And departing leave behind us,
Footsteps on the sands of time —
Footprints that perchance another,
Sailing o'er life's troubled main ;
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.”

It is not a noble mind that despises an honorable fame. Poets have labored to sing it out of existence, and essayists have written learnedly as to its vanity, but it is questionable whether they succeeded in convincing any considerable portion of mankind that their affected indifference about its possession was real. A far more probable and perhaps just conclusion which their readers would draw, is, that the desire of the thing which they denounce as unworthy of human pursuit, constituted the soul of their exertions. It has been pictured as a beautiful bubble which dissolves as soon as it is grasped — a light aerial thing that ceases with the breath which creates it. And one whose notes are often sublime,

and rise in grandeur as they flow in unison with the theme of the soul's immortality, joined company with less noble minds, when his harp discoursed :—

“What so foolish as the chase of fame?
How vain the prize! how impotent our aim!
For what are men who grasp at praise sublime.
But bubbles on the rapid stream of time.
That rise and fall, that swell and are no more,
Born and forgot ten thousand in an hour.”

Minds which never rise to the comprehension of the beautiful and the exalted, and whose conceptions never compass the grandeur of their being, but range along that lowly path which begins in the cradle and terminates in the grave, have sometimes scouted the idea of its reality, and uttered the idiot's laugh at its utility. Satire, wit, philosophy, and religion, have at different times been marshalled into service for its extermination. And if this crusade has sometimes been conducted by the disappointed and misanthropic, the virtuous and the wise have also occasionally lent their aid, that, if possible, this noble element of power and success in the human mind might be annihilated. But the presumption is as legitimate as it is charitable, that the great and the excellent who have labored to discourage its pursuit, waged their warfare not against an honorable fame, but against that which was baptized in its name, but was of mean parentage, and frail as the breath which gave it existence—a vicious counterfeit of the valuable coin, that enriched no one with a blessing. Those only who are afraid to live, could wish to die unmourned, unwept, and unsung. There are none,

unless they have quenched the noblest aspirations of their souls, to whom the thought of falling into utter forgetfulness is not abhorrent. The spirit no more shudders at the idea of annihilation, than it shrinks appalled from the prospect of oblivion.

To be thrown aside as the lifeless clod—to be cut off from the sympathies of this animated world—to have our images effaced from the minds of the living—all recollection of us blotted from human memory—with no golden thought—no living virtue—no breathing bond of endearment to bind us to those gentle spirits who survive us, and to those warm hearts which will throb around this earth when ours are pulseless; such reflections would be at war with all the elements in our nature which stamp the impress of endless duration upon our being. Born for immortality, all the yearnings and tendencies which thrill through the framework of our spiritual organization toil towards this high destiny. And as God has given to all things which He has formed the property of self-perpetuation, so has He also endowed the mind with capabilities through which the memory of its existence in this world may be prolonged for years after it has been transferred to that glorious field, where the sphere of its exertion is boundless as eternity. The influence of its intellectual creations and its moral offspring may flame along its pathway through life, and so incorporate itself with the mass of human mind, that the light of its reflected glow will assist to illumine the world for generations to come. It is a tendency in our nature which should be fostered, not crushed; culti-

vated, and not destroyed—it is not to be repressed, but aided and judiciously directed in its out-goings; for it is the motive power of the soul, and lies at the foundation of all that is noble, good, and great. This desire for a worthy posthumous remembrance was the matrix in which were generated the conceptions of those political, social, and moral organizations, which have made the world radiant with their blessings, and advanced the race far in its progress towards perfection. It is the womb in which all those intellectual creations, that have enriched us with the wealth of science, the treasures of philosophy, the benefits of law, and the blessings of ethics, were warmed into life. It is therefore not unreasonable to maintain, that an honorable fame is a legitimate object of human pursuit, and worthy of the aspiration of those who have just conceptions of the dignity and destiny of man. Ambrose uttered the sentiment of the great and good when he said: “For mine own part, I wish so to order my conversation in the world, that I may live when I am dead in the affections of the best, and leave an honorable testimony in the consciences of the worst; that I may oppress none and do good to all; that I may neither be ashamed to live nor afraid to die.”

But what is an honorable fame? I answer, that approbation and veneration which mankind accord to an individual whose life and labors have resulted in the elevation and happiness of the race, and contributed to the advancement of the Divine glory. It is *that* distinction which is associated with acts which either immediately or remotely promote the

prosperity and permanency of the State, or the progress and the glory of the Church ;—with labors performed, whether intellectual, moral, or manual, which are followed with visible good to the public. For whether it is the laying of the foundation of an empire, the making and administration of law, or the doing of that which adds strength and beauty to the social structure, the authors or promoters of such deeds are worthy of profound regard. It must not be supposed that an honorable posthumous fame is the product only of elevated stations, of rare intellectual gifts, of valuable discoveries, or extraordinary achievements, which enrol the name of the individual associated with them on the durable records of history. It need not be carved out by the sword, nor purchased with blood ; for if those germs of immortality which are found in every human bosom are but fostered and cultivated, each one may rear for himself an imperishable monument of virtues that will always command the esteem of mankind. The extent of its range is not essential to its existence ; a world-wide circle need not be filled by those who possess it. The gem that glitters far down in the unfathomable depths of the ocean, and flames only to the eye of Him who formed it, is intrinsically as excellent as the diamond which sparkles in the imperial crown, and as valuable in the estimation of its producer as the more conspicuous one that glows on the brow in which reside the destinies of a kingdom. Wherever the sphere of our exertions may lie, in the State or in the Church, whether in humble or exalted life, man carries within himself the needful resources

to perpetuate his principles and memory. The world has, perhaps, never known such deep degeneracy as wholly to withhold its admiration from those who distinguished themselves in labors to benefit mankind. And, accordingly, we find that among all nations was merit rewarded; and in all ages have those received expressions of public approbation whose labors for the general good were crowned with success. A nation's heroes and a nation's benefactors are enthroned side by side in her chronicles, and their merit is proclaimed by the erection of monuments of durable materials. Egypt has her pyramids; and Greece and Rome have their memorials of intellectual triumphs; and from the ruins of Nineveh shafts and columns are dug up, bearing records of the great and useful men who were identified with the leading events of their age. Such always has been, and such always will be, the sentiment of mankind.

It is one among the loftiest instincts of our nature, to admire and love that which is exalted and great. The beauty of the landscape, the magnificence of the river, and the vastness of the sea, kindle in the mind elevated and pleasurable emotions. But, amid all that is great and glowing in the outspread gorgeousness of the universe, there is no object which awakens such thrilling and unearthly joy within us, as a human mind, girded with strength and robed with the majesty of breathing thought. Its ethereal glow is imparted and transfused through our being, until a wild ecstasy dances along every fibre of our spiritual framework, and willing or unwilling, *commands* our homage. There is a

beauty in the winged cloud, and in the circling wave—there is a glory in the quiet stars, and in the flaming firmament — there is a power in those utterances which come from the awful shrines of nature — there is a grandeur in the storm-tossed ocean ; but there is a higher beauty, a more ravishing glory, a more subduing power, and a sublimer grandeur thrown around a great intellect laboring with a theme of corresponding dignity. Whether it be the mind of a Webster rising in the greatness of his intellectual strength, far above the range of ordinary thought, scattering from its faculties mountain obstacles which lie in the way to its conclusions, as the lion shakes the dew-drop from his mane ; bursting all the clogs and fetters which bind inferior capacities to earth and self, and moving amid the peerless splendor of that sphere of deliberation, where the interests of party and the individual are shut out by purity, by honor, by patriotism, and right — or whether it be the mind of a Massillon, picturing the temptations, the follies, and vices of a licentious court, and pealing into the ears of his proud monarch the cutting declaration — “Sire, God alone is great!” we are constrained to do homage to the truly great, whenever and wherever the force of their genius is recalled. I refer to these eminent examples, simply to illustrate the point, that the laws and impulses of our being make it a necessary pleasure to honor the intellectually great. And the same elements in our nature demand a like tribute to the truly good. The instincts of humanity in this particular must be regarded as true and right, because sanctioned by

reason, and endorsed by the universal consent of mankind. And where intellectual endowments are associated with moral goodness, their possessor will bequeath to his posterity a name clothed with a fragrant remembrance. The misguided genius may link *his* name with intellectual creations that flash with a bewildering glare through all coming time ; but if his life was productive of no good, and his talents were consecrated to evil, his fame can only serve as a beacon-light, flickering on the midnight cliff where he wrecked his hopes, to warn other voyagers of the rocks which have destroyed a soul. But that those who were benefactors of their race, will, while the world stands, beneficially influence immortal minds, is susceptible of the clearest demonstration. The names of Luther and Washington will live forever ! Their tombs are pilgrim shrines, whither men from all climes, kindreds, and tongues resort, to do reverence to the ashes of the distinguished dead. And what magic power attracts these admiring crowds around their mouldering dust ? Manifestly the recollection of their achievements. The one was that “solitary monk who shook the world,” unchained the Bible, and conducted the church from a superstitious vassalage into light and freedom ; the other broke from our nation’s limbs the shackles of oppression, and delivered us from a painful bondage. Therefore are the graves of these fathers of civil and religious freedom hallowed ground, because consecrated by the tears of nations, and enshrined in the affections of mankind. There may the victims of political and spiritual despotism rekindle their hopes. And to these shrines do

those repair who are groaning under painful oppression, to catch from those ashes that inspiration which made them a terror to all tyrants. Around these honored tombs do the yearnings of laboring nations gather, and from these centres radiate those influences which kindled a quickening hope in the crushed and bleeding hearts of those, who now convulse the kingdoms of earth by lifting from the deep foundations of centuries and overturning the thrones of hoary despotism.

And why are the tombs of eminent civilians and ecclesiastics, and numerous other citizens who were distinguished for those qualities of mind and heart which made them useful, often strewed with fresh memorials of undying love? Is it not because the man and the benefactor are remembered in his deeds? Behold those crowds who throng the cemetery to commune with the dead! See how they stand in groups around certain graves, and direct the attention of children to the decorated mounds! There is a reason for it; for there sleep those who baptized the world with the influences of a holy life, and who contributed to the intellectual, historical, or moral wealth of the nation. Therefore do parents recount the deeds of those to their children, and lay open to their view the road which conducts to an honorable distinction. And wouldest thou be remembered when the cumberers of earth are forgotten, and cherished after the winds of many years have sighed their requiems over thy grass-grown sepulchre? then let it be thy care now to build thy character of solid virtues, and thou wilt have a monument more durable

than marble or brass. Let thy name live in useful enterprises, in investments for the poor of thy community, for the instruction and salvation of the destitute, and it will go with thy benefactions and write itself in every heart befriended, and engrave itself on the memory of those souls who will make mention before the throne of God of the hand that snatched them from devouring flames. Bring thy treasures of mind, of influence, of silver and gold, and lay them at the feet of the great Redeemer, saying, Son of God, take these thine own gifts, bathe them with thy blood, and send them on their mission for thy honor; and so shall your name live through the infinite circle of thy Saviour's glory. All the venerated dead enshrined themselves in the hearts of their contemporaries by lives of usefulness, and commended themselves to the Divine favor by their virtues; and, therefore, their deeds, like "the spikenard of the woman in the gospel, shall yet fill the world with their fragrance." If, therefore, an honorable posthumous fame may be obtained by moral goodness as well as by intellectual greatness, then is it possible for all to secure for themselves that kind of remembrance most valued among men, and which, like the precious gem, never tarnishes with age. It is peculiar to no sphere, but may grow in private or in public, in humble or exalted life. It demands not the intellect of a Webster, nor the eloquence of a Clay, to earn it. They are among the illustrious departed; but not the only gems which sparkle in our nation's diadem, nor the only stars that shine in that constellation of worthies, whose light guides others in the way to

glory. There may not be many the range of whose earthly fame is so extensive; but, if they are just men, their "memory will be blessed." The individual who leads an upright and holy life imparts an influence to the world which will never die.

Man, as he is sometimes viewed, is frail and evanescent. "Compared with many visible objects, man is ephemeral. Compared with the sun that shines over him — the air which fans him — the ocean on which he floats, his 'duration is swift decay.' And there is much pensiveness in the thought of his own frailty. To look out, as we were last week looking, on the plenitude of summer — to view the field in its loveliness and the forest in its gorgeous glory — to inhale the fragrance of roses mingling with earth's ripeness, and think how soon our eyes must shut forever on that landscape — how soon aromatic breezes and blushing flowers shall stir no animation in our tombs; in such contemplations there is a deep pathos, and to surrender the spirit to their habitual mastery would be to live a life of constant melancholy." Truly would such meditations, not associated with the durable elements in man, beget those sweetly sad emotions which are breathed in Tennyson's "Farewell to the Brook."

"Flow down cold rivulet to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver;
No more by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

"But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
Forever and forever.

“A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.”

But the virtuous and great will live in the remembrance and homage of mankind. If indestructibility is a property of matter, so is it also of thoughts, of words, and of deeds. Every exalted sentiment, every pious word, every charitable act, carries within itself a procreative power. And as the seed only requires a soil, air, moisture, and light, to reproduce unnumbered harvests of its kind, so are the spiritual emanations of man freighted with the germs of other harvests which shall grow on the intellectual and moral fields of humanity. It is impossible that a man should live without exerting a determining influence upon others, inasmuch as his actions do not, and cannot, terminate upon himself. As the body of one who is wasting away under a pestilential disease emits an invisible but offensive odor, and imparts to the atmosphere such a noxious taint that the visitor to his chamber cannot long remain without contracting the malady, so does the depraved man send out an unseen, but felt influence, that vitiates and destroys souls. In accordance with the same law does the holy man throw off an imperceptible moral power, which enlarges its circle of influence and multiplies in its blessings to the end of time. None, however humble his mission, leaves the world as he found it: he gives it the impress of his character, and vitalizes it to a greater or less extent with his own spirit; so that long after he is gathered to his fathers, the desires which once

throbb'd only in his bosom, and the principles that once controlled only his mind, will have become a part of those moral influences which will shape the destiny of generations to come.

The truth of this statement was obscurely present to the consciousness of those even upon whom the light of revelation had not dawned. The theology of the ancient Egyptians recognized a vital and indestructible principle in virtue. But among all those who were chiefly indebted to the light of reason and philosophical conjecture for their knowledge, none have expressed themselves with such beauty and sublimity as the Parsis. Helvetius informs us, that at the burial of a distinguished citizen, a funeral oration was pronounced, and the subjoined service uttered over the tomb of the departed. "O, earth! O! common mother of human beings, take back what to thee appertaineth of the body of this hero; let the aqueous particles that flowed in his veins exhale into the air, and falling in rain on the mountains, replenish the streams, fertilize the plains, and roll back to the abyss of the ocean whence they proceeded! Let the fire concentrated in this body rejoin the heavenly orb, the source of light and heat! Let the air confined in his members, burst its prison, and be diffused by the mundane space! And lastly thou, O, breath of life, if perchance thou art of a nature separate from all others, return to the unknown being that produced thee; or, if thou art only a mixture of various elements, mayst thou, after being dispersed in the universe, again assemble thy scattered particles, to form another citizen

as virtuous as this has been." Is there not, in these sublime images and noble sentiments of this people, a dim recognition of the fact, that the spiritual influences thrown off from man's intellectual and moral natures perish not, but go out upon their endless mission of benefactions to mankind. The same thought is expressed in the forcible and eloquent tribute of our own Webster, to the memory of one of his associate and rival senators. "A superior and commanding intellect, and truly great man, when heaven vouchsafes so rare a gift, is not a temporary flame, burning bright for a while, and then expiring, giving place to returning darkness. It is rather a spark of fervent heat as well as radiant light, with power to enkindle the common mass of human mind; so that when it glimmers in its own decay, and finally goes out in death, no night follows, but it leaves the world all light, all on fire, from the potent contact of its own spirit. Bacon died, but the human understanding, roused by the touch of his miraculous wand to a perception of the true philosophy, and the just mode of inquiring after truth, has kept on its course successfully and gloriously. Newton died, yet the courses of the spheres are still known, and they yet move on in the orbits which he saw and described for them in the infinity of space."

And if such is the force and destiny of a massive human intellect, that it incorporates itself with the aggregate mind of earth, living from age to age in breathing thoughts and exalted sentiments, is it not equally true, that moral goodness has the elements of an immortality co-enduring with the

products of the understanding? Aye, the greatest purely intellectual offspring, even of Webster, would be destined to perish, if not sooner, in the fires of a consuming world, that will reduce all monuments, records, and histories to ashes, had he not bound by a living faith his fleeting existence to the Immutable and Eternal. He was never greater than when he comprehended and confessed his weakness, and clung to his Saviour, uttering his conviction of the truth of God's promises in his own language — "That rod! that rod," — "That staff! that staff" — "That is what they want — that is what they want," in passing from this to that nobler existence which opens in a boundless eternity. His *moral* goodness is the element of perpetuity in his world — wide, his honorable and everlasting fame.

And how much more than the Parsis to whom I referred, may we from whom Christianity has lifted the veil of darkness and doubt, and in whom it imparts its own undying existence to all the moral products that flow from it, say to those virtues which adorned the character of a deceased friend, and to the influences which have radiated from him who was "a light of the world;" go, ye offspring of the gospel and the Holy Ghost, on your errands of blessing through the empire of charity, and unite in other souls, and when the earth has been renovated, humanity recovered and beautified with salvation, return to the infinite fountain of all good, from whom you proceeded.

A marked and beautiful feature in the economy of the Divine government is, that those blessings which are abso-

lutely essential to the happiness and perfection of our being, are indiscriminately bestowed upon all, while others that may or may not be made subservient to the welfare of an immortal spirit, are given to the few. For example: the air, the sunshine, and water are indispensable to our existence, and these are furnished freely and abundantly to all; whereas, those rare intellectual gifts that elevate their possessor far above the masses, are vouchsafed to the few, because not necessary to the attainment of happiness. While, therefore, intellectual eminence is reached by a comparatively small number, the invaluable blessings comprehended in a life of honorable actions, of benevolence and holiness, may be enjoyed as abundantly by all, as the air we breathe and the light which falls so profusely around us. The disciple "whom Jesus loved," was doubtless intellectually inferior to some of the others, and that which won for him a higher place in the affections of the Master, was unquestionably his moral goodness. Being naturally of an amiable disposition, the powers of his soul were harmoniously developed under the genial warmth of the Saviour's love, until all the graces of a lofty excellence blended and glowed in his character. And while it would neither be desirable, nor tend to the general good, were all men endowed with like mental capacities, it is important to the glory of God that all may attain that style of moral excellence which exalts man into sympathy with the noble and good of all ages, and to fellowship with Jehovah. It is not needful to the excellence, harmony, and efficiency of the organism of nature, that there

should be a greater number of high mountains, large rivers, lakes, and seas, than those which the Almighty hand has fashioned ; and it is not in themselves, but as they are set off by hills of a less altitude, streams of a smaller compass, and all these by plains and valleys, that we have beauty, because variety. And not only is this diversity in the material world essential to the comeliness of the picture which it offers to the eye, but the mutual dependence that subsists between the different parts which make up the creation, gives utility to the entire work. In like manner has God ordained in human society a diversity of gifts and vocations, sustaining such relations to each other, and so blended in their interests, that when they fulfil their respective missions, they reflect the wisdom of their Sovereign and promote the happiness of all. And while He has assigned to the few the grandeur of the mountain, to some the magnificence of the river, and to others the lowliness and fragrance of the violet and lily, He sheds upon all the light of His countenance and the dews of His grace, that all may flourish in the beauty of holiness, and reflect back to the giver an image of His own loveliness.

It is, therefore, manifest that all may become useful, virtuous, and acceptable to God ; and if such be their privilege, then may all so live as to be affectionately remembered when dead. And this should be one of the great objects of life with every individual. Contempt for the community which is the sphere of our exertions, and of mankind in general, is no evidence of wisdom or talent, but proof of ignorance or baseness. For man cannot disregard the esteem of others

until he has first divested himself of those honorable sentiments and feelings of self-respect, which cannot be lost without vitiating the character. And while there are not many who may aspire to that illustrious distinction, that extensive and brilliant renown which is properly the inheritance only of a few, I would say to the youth of industry and talent: Start in the race of life with the determination to rise to the highest point to which the energy and capacity of your mind will carry you. When you have reached that elevation, you will be contented, for you have filled the measure of your duty. And although no imperial crown shall glitter upon these brows, and no obsequious courtiers surround us in the attitude of menials, we may so endear ourselves to the circles in which we move, and so incorporate our enterprise, benevolence, and purity, in the body of the social structure, that a fragrant remembrance will survive us when gone to wear a fadeless diadem of glory. The man of affluence may transmit his name to the latest posterity by the erection of hospitals, the endowing of institutions of learning, and by building houses of worship. William Penn, by a prudent reservation of land in Delaware, affords facilities for intellectual culture to the present generation. A gentleman in England has recently devoted eighty thousand pounds to the erection of Christian chapels; and our own Lawrence, and many others, have left memorials of their enlightened zeal and benevolent spirit, in making provision for the wants of the indigent and friendless. That man who bends his exertions to the elevation of his race cannot be neglected or for

gotten. And it should be a source of profound gratitude that the instincts of nature prompt us to honor the memory of the useful and great. For it is this appreciation of merit on the part of mankind that encourages the young to imitate the example of those whose honors they would share. I regard, therefore, the discharge of duties and the exertion of a man's faculties in such a manner as to secure for him an honorable fame, perfectly legitimate, and in accordance with the lessons of Christianity. The gospel is not designed to give new attributes to our nature, nor to throw out of our constitution the elements which it there finds, and especially one so potent that its extinction would cause every enterprise to flag, and the wheels of progress to stand still; but its office is to purify all the generous impulses of our nature, and lead them forth attired with the ornaments of Divine grace, and direct them to such efforts as will benefit man and glorify God.

As the truly good or great man desires only such posthumous remembrance as is fitted to incite others to exertions that may result in permanent good to mankind, so in whatever offspring of his mind or heart his memory is perpetuated, he accomplishes the end of his toils. He would live in the affections of others not from motives of vanity, but that the recollections of his struggles and triumphs may become to some other weary travellers who follow in the race of life, what the achievements of the good of former times are to him—a means of refreshment and encouragement when oppressed with the burdens of his vocation.

Who that has ever struggled with difficulties until dispirited because everything transpired adversely to his hopes, and the wheels of human machinery seemed out of joint, so that its music grated harshly on his sensibilities, and then took down from the shelf the Holy Book, or some other record which brought him into communion with men who had travelled the same path, and overcome those very obstacles that brought him to a stand-still, has not gathered strength to start afresh and successfully keep on in that road which had appeared to him in that moment of depression swept by torments and obstructed by mountains? Who can estimate the number of those who have been taught the omnipotent energy of faith, by the recorded trial of Abraham? How many young men has the example of the inflexibly chaste Hebrew youth who was tempted to commit crime in the house of Potiphar, kept back from shame and "the path of the destroyer?" With what child-like and unshaken trust in the goodness of an overruling Providence, does the history of Elijah and that of the widow of Sarepta inspire those who are under the hard pressures of poverty? What millions have found in the experience of David, so touchingly described in his Psalms, the inward distresses, sorrows and conflicts of their own souls, and by treading in his footsteps have been conducted to the sources of healing, and to the fountains of spiritual joy? Where is the sufferer who may not profit in the school of Job? Who has not approached with a holier boldness and a stronger confidence the throne of grace after communion with Hannah, with Joshua, and Daniel?

And who knows how much the example of Moses may have contributed to the success of our Washington, who trusted in God and the righteousness of our cause? If we need models of purity, of benevolence, and of patriotism to animate us, the records of the past are full of illustrious names. That cloud of witnesses of the holy departed the Apostle exhorts us to regard as patterns of excellence, and we should as reluctantly attempt to strike one of these from the moral firmament, as we would one of the luminaries which shines in the canopy of heaven; for they relieve the world of its moral gloom, as the stars do the earth of natural darkness. And in like manner are those important to the living who did not rise to the intellectual and moral elevation of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, but who served God in an honorable capacity.

Individuals who have acquired large wealth, are mostly possessed of fine intellectual capacities, which make them comprehensive and far-reaching in their calculations; and if they are the followers of Him "who was rich, but for our sakes became poor," they will in their recognition of the true source of their prosperity, feel their high responsibility, and make such a disposition of a portion of their property, that it may flow down through all time in streams of blessing, and shed a moral grandeur over the wide bosom of eternity. An individual establishes and sustains a mission in a heathen land, and multitudes will rise around the throne of judgment to pronounce him blessed. The Sabbath School System was once a conception, as the universe was once a thought, and

the originator has linked his name with a brilliant immortality. Thousands of immortal minds have been raised from a foul obscurity, and transferred from paths of ruin to the path of peace, by the "Ragged School;" but it also sprang from a benevolent mind. What a monument of enlightened zeal and well-directed piety is the Bible Society! Its founders have long since gone to their reward, but their instrumentality sheds light and salvation over our sin-stricken earth. The ample charities and generous aid of affluent Christians have given to the country brilliant intellects, which now shine on the watch-towers of freedom and the walls of Zion, presiding over the interests of religion, and controlling the destinies of the nation. And are not those whose generous instrumentality has gemmed our national history with some of its brightest jewels, by furnishing the world patriotic statesmen, gifted artists, and eloquent divines, worthy of everlasting remembrance? Aye, they cannot be forgotten—their names *shall* not die! No! not as long as thought survives, for their fame will be co-enduring with the immortality of that intellectual and moral wealth which they were instrumental in pouring upon the altars of their country and its Divine Sovereign.

There are those, however, whose inability to do something great inclines them to do nothing at all. This is a mistaken view of duty. God's care has accompanied the widow's mite, so that it has produced its millions. He looks with approbation not only on the will to do good, but also furnishes the link to bind us in that chain of influences which shall yet regenerate the world. That little congregational

circle of ladies toiling for the poor at home and abroad, is known in heaven, and contemplated with interest by angels as co-workers with God and His holy ones in the great work of redemption. Many schools are sustained in heathen lands by the earnings of these societies. These cast their bread upon the waters with regrets that they can sow so small a harvest; but the revelations of the final day will show that these little efforts have wrought stupendous results. The little copper and silver of the missionary-box will yet be contemplated in the wealth of eternal glory. Courage, ye little bands, so often tempted to discontinue your efforts; for those stitches will make white robes for heathen souls, and the Holy Spirit will transform those penny contributions into crowns of gold, and your tears into sparkling gems, to adorn those who are the objects of your charity. All can do something to keep their memories green. If not possessed of the needful wealth to do a work which demands a large outlay, unite with kindred spirits like the drops which form the rivulet, and you will create a stream that will widen its channel and multiply in its blessings as it flows. Do something for your country, for the race, and for Christ. Have you a child? You can consecrate it to God, and train it for usefulness. If you have none, take an orphan from the Lord's family of poor; bestow upon it the tenderness of a mother, or the care of a father, and you will live in it; and in the day of retribution Jesus will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done this unto one of these little ones, ye have done it unto me." If you can do no more, leave to your posterity a

pious example, and you will bequeath to mankind a legacy more valuable than gold, yea, than much fine gold," unaccompanied with moral excellence. For as the influence of none is so insignificant that he may not mould some character after the pattern of his own, so every one who consecrates himself to God through our instrumentality constitutes a living monument to our memory. We die, but our characters live as representatives of our vices or virtues. Of the first martyr on holy record it is written: "He being dead, yet speaketh." "Enoch walked with God," and his example encourages others to toil for the same honorable distinction. We may secure a "good name, which is more precious than rubies"—a name whose effulgence may fill the canopy of exalted life, or diffuse its fragrance around the walks of the lowly; and, like the flower hid by ranker grasses, its sweetness will reveal the place of its seclusion. Faith, hope, and charity, uniting in human character, invest it with sublime energy, and cause its influence to vibrate along those golden chords of love which hold in unison Jehovah with the subjects of His empire. Thus a pure heart exults not merely in its conscious elevation into the sympathies of the intelligent universe, but itself becomes a fountain where waters of life spring up and flow out to gladden a weary world. The granite rock yields particle after particle, as its just tribute to the great law of mutation, until the immense pile has dissolved like snow; but a good name stands unimpaired through this process of change, for its foundations repose upon the rock of immutable truth, and,

built of virtues as imperishable as their Author, the noble structure will not be enfeebled by the weight and moss of centuries, but partake more and more of the changeless nature of that eternity into which it rises sublimely and gloriously.

Such are the properties of an honorable posthumous fame, that each one may possess it to the full measure of his capacity. And while the exalted statesman lives in, and is honored for the creation of those laws which are the sinews of the body politic, and for those moral qualities with which he healthfully animates the commonwealth, the gentle dews of a mother's love may shine forever as gems of richest lustre in her child hard by the throne of God, and, after the records on adamant shall have melted in the fires of the last day, those lessons written by the potent touch of her influence on immortal minds, will remain bright and glorious. It is a prize which would more than compensate the sleepless toil of ten thousand ages. It is a boon worthy of the great God who offers it. Enter then in earnest upon its pursuit — fill, if you can, earth and heaven with your fame, but have a care that it is honorable. Drop along the walks of daily life, kind words and noble deeds; for these are the blocks which must compose the pile that is to point to coming travellers the path to glory. Somewhere there is a tomb with this inscription—“What I have saved, I have lost; what I gave away, I have.” And this will one day be the experience of all, and true not only of their charities, but also of the wealth of their virtues. For only that life which imparts its blessing

to others, is crowned with peace ; those only who have “served their day and generation according to the will of God,” will be kindly cherished when they rest from their labors. There is animation in the thought, that when others shall linger around our tombs, they may recall judicious counsels, faithful instructions, and noble deeds ; and that our very ashes may kindle hope and energy in minds unborn. There is a glory in every conquest which the Christian makes over the world and his corruptions, that I see nowhere else. The interests that enter into the conflict are so commanding in their issues, the enemies so formidable, the consequences of failure so tremendous, and the blessings of success so immeasurably great, that while I watch his struggles, all the sympathies of my being kindle into burning, and I could shout with all the intensity of my soul into his ears, courage my brother, life, *Eternal Life* is the prize. The mind is always glorious in lofty action or sublime contemplation, but never glows with such an unearthly grandeur, as when she hopes, prays, and toils for eternity. Laboring in unison with the Eternal, with her eye fixed on a resplendent immortality, she gathers strength and glory as chord after chord which binds the noble captive to earth is snapped, until the last that detains her is severed, and she ascends amid the hallelujahs of ministering angels to the bosom of God. It is announced for the encouragement of the good and great—“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another ; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that

feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man that spareth his own son that serveth him." And may we all rise to that sublime view of our nature and destiny, that in all our pursuits after inferior good, we may breathe the utterances of a gifted poet :

“ Attempt how vain,
With things of earthly sort, with aught but God,
With aught but moral excellence, truth and love—
To satisfy and fill the immortal soul !
To satisfy the ocean with a drop ;
To marry immortality to death,
And with the unsubstantial shade of time
To fill the embrace of all eternity.”

And under the force of this conviction we *will* seek the light of the Divine favor, and, united to Him, we shall be enshrined in the being of God, and LIVE FOREVER.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

THE REPOSE OF THE HOLY DEAD.

THERE is no place where Christianity glows with such a Divine lustre, and where its consolations are so precious and sublime, as at the grave where we commit a cherished one to rest. Its hopes loom out upon the gloom that oppresses the heart there as the sun when it bursts full-orbed through the dark storm-clouds which obscure the canopy of heaven. However much we may have pondered the mysteries of the gospel and appreciated its lessons, we can never understand its priceless value so fully as when its light bursts through our clouds of dark calamity, and spans them with the bow of promise, as its rays are reflected by our tears. We may have often heard and read the blessed announcement “that Christ brought life and immortality to light,” but there we feel it. We may have admired that charming promise, “When thou goest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.” But, ineffably more precious did we find this promise in our deep afflictions, when our souls felt the conscious presence and

support of the everlasting arms underneath us. As the rose gives out its most delicious fragrance when it is crushed, so do the promises of God breathe their healing balm most effectually when pressed upon hearts broken with sorrow. We do not marvel that the poor bereaved Pagan should be inconsolable; for there is no power in his religion to disperse the clouds which hang around the grave — all is shrouded in impenetrable gloom. No voice utters words of hope from the mysterious spirit-world. No messenger comes to him, to tell of a bright and glorious future. To him eternity is a boundless, dark expanse, where the light of reason goes out, and no star of hope burns. His religion contains not one lesson to relieve and comfort his grief-stricken heart; it has nothing wherewith to reconcile him to his loss. He may call Socrates and Plato to his aid, and consult the maxims of other philosophers, but they will leave him as hopeless and miserable as ever. They may, indeed, exhort him to exercise submission to an inevitable necessity, and extol fortitude under trials as an exalted virtue; but, what is there in all this to cure heart-sorrow? — what are all these sublime teachings of the ancient sages worth, in the hour of bereavement and death? They comfort no mourner — they lift no sorrow from the heart — they soothe or heal no anguished spirit. It is true their mythologies speak of Elysian fields, ornamented with all that can gratify the senses; but notwithstanding the wild and romantic pictures with which glowing imaginations have peopled the future home of the heathen, there is nothing real — nothing to fill the soul

with assurance of immortal good. For whatever fields of science, of literature, and of philosophy, we may explore, we shall find no plant that grows in these possessed of such virtues as quiet a distressed bosom; for only the balm of Gilead can mollify and heal the wounds of a stricken soul. But whatever causes there may be for the distress of the poor benighted and bereaved heathen, these should not disturb the Christian. His sky may be shrouded in thick darkness, but the star of Bethlehem still shines in the midst of it. Storms of affliction may beat long and loud around him; but as wave after wave breaks over his soul, he hears the accents of a well-known voice, "Be not afraid, it is I." The tomb may have its gloom, but light falls from the cross to illumine the dark mansion.

Thus far, I have endeavored to offer to the consideration of the reader those lessons of instruction which the sepulchre is so eminently fitted to suggest, and which, because invested with the solemnities of the final hour, should be impressively felt. I trust that the fact has been established, that, while it bereaves us of our treasures, it compensates us in some measure for the losses sustained by the instruction it affords. But while it is capable of enriching the mind with lessons of wisdom, and of inciting us to increased exertions in all that can elevate and dignify the soul, and qualify it for the exalted destiny which lies before it, the sepulchre also offers lessons, which are consolatory and soothing to the distressed. To those whose lot is cast amid the influences of Christianity, and who are permitted to contemplate all things under the

light of revelation, there can be nothing which may not become to them a messenger of good. Let us then devoutly interrogate the sepulchre in the light, and with the assistance of the holy oracles of God;—that Book which is truly said to be “Heaven’s best gift and surest guide to man.”

“Most wondrous book! Bright candle of the Lord!
 Star of eternity! only star
 By which the bark of man could navigate
 The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
 Securely! only star which rose on time,
 And, on its dark and troubled billows, still,
 As generation drifting swiftly by,
 Succeeded generation, threw a ray
 Of Heaven’s own light, and to the hills of God,
 The eternal hills, pointed the sinner’s eye.
 This Book, this holy book, on every line
 Marked with the seal of high divinity;
 On every leaf bedew’d with drops of love
 Divine, and with th’ eternal heraldry
 And signature of God Almighty stamped
 From first to last, this ray of sacred light,
 This lamp from off the everlasting throne,
 Mercy took down, and in the night of time
 Stood casting on the dark her gracious bow;
 And evermore beseeching men with tears
 And earnest sighs, to *read, believe, and live.*”

This star burns so brilliantly in our moral firmament, that it sheds light into the tomb, and causes the ashes of our departed to glow with immortality. It directs our thoughts from the lowliness of the sepulchre, to those hills of life which are radiant with immortal bloom, and from the darkness of the grave to the ineffable glory of the world to come. Aye, it is the Bible, with its revelations of another and a higher

state of existence, and its records of Him who went down into the chambers of death, and in the domain of the king of terrors won for himself and his followers a conquest over the dreaded tyrant, that makes the grave to believers a pleasant retreat from the turmoils of earth, and a place of peaceful repose from their labors. The Bible has endowed the tomb with speech, so that its utterances to bereaved souls are messages of consolation. Gathered in thought around the still but venerable abodes of our loved ones, we hear from the awful shrines of the dead, as the first lesson of consolation, that the inmates of the sepulchre rest in peace.

“There is a calm for those who weep,
A rest for weary pilgrims found;
They softly lie, and sweetly sleep,
Low in the ground.”

Who has not felt a charm like that of angel melodies floating over his soul, as he stood by the open grave into which the remains of a weary pilgrim had been laid, and over which the words were uttered, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea, saith the spirit, from henceforth; for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” As he was not united to us by any closer ties than those of humanity and religion, the heart is not steeped in that grief which overwhelms the soul when a family bond is broken, and therefore feels more impressively and deeply the force of this blessed assurance. The mind of the spectator is just sufficiently solemnized, and is in that quiet calm, when the finer sensibilities of our nature

vibrate in sweet response to lofty and touching sentiments. And to one in such a frame, the words quoted fall upon his placid spirit as if spoken fresh from the throne of God, and still redolent with the soft and grief-quieting influences of heaven. The contrast is so marked—the change so impressive! But yesterday I stood by the bed where lay in anguish this brother mortal. I held his fevered hand in mine; I moistened his parched lips, and cooled his burning brow. I still see the imploring look for help, while disease ran like liquid fire through his veins, and his whole frame quivered with anguish as he cried, “Lord, hasten my redemption, and give me rest.” And now the harp, that groaned discordant notes of pain, lies shattered, but will again be strung to discourse the lofty strains of redeeming love in heaven.

Yes, they are truly blessed who have overcome and fallen asleep in Jesus. And there are moments of sore pressure, of weariness and of pain, when we could wish the last conflict over, that we might also repose in the peaceful grave. It is true, that human nature clings fondly to life, and even makes us willing to exist amid the wrecks of our happiness and hopes, under the pressure of poverty and sickness, uncared for, and unbefriended; but it does not, therefore, follow that such would not be happier if resting in the tomb. For this love of life is a law of our being, wisely ordained for the good of society, and designed to prevent persons from rushing unbidden into the presence of a holy God. But is not this reluctance to surrender our breath also intended to subserve a yet higher purpose? Are not the operations of this

law, which holds man with such a firm grasp to this fleeting existence, premonitions, or echoes of his immortality? And are not the dying, themselves, conscious that the dissolution of the soul and body terminates not the existence of the spirit? If not, what mean those outcries of terror, or those rapturous utterances which break from the pillows of the dying! O! it is the unfitness, or fitness, of individuals to endure those eternal realities which break in their terrific or sublime grandeur upon the vision of the soul, that causes those scenes of distress and joy which we sometimes witness in the chambers of death. And, while there is nothing to console in the case of unhappy departures but the conviction that a just Sovereign is on the throne, and that they pass into the hands of a merciful God, there is every thing to assure us of the blessedness of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. The relations which joined them to a laboring and suffering world are all dissolved, and they have uttered their eternal farewell to sickness, sorrow, and pain. They now enjoy unclouded peace and undisturbed tranquillity; and is not this a very precious consolation to surviving friends?

Could we wish the weather-beaten mariner, who has just crossed the threshold of his home, and is now locked in the embraces of his family, back again upon the stormy seas, and amid the dashing waves and pelting storms through which he has passed with much suffering and with great peril? Nay, we rather pronounce him blessed, and congratulate him on having safely reached his port and his home. Had we the power, would we command that friend, who has been

stretched upon a bed of languishing and pain for months and years, but who is just risen up, and is for the first time abroad upon a bright morning, rejoicing like an uncaged bird while breathing the pure air of heaven, back to his couch, and assign him yet, other sleepless nights and days of pain? Ah, no! it is with emotions of joy, as if ourselves had been relieved of a painful burden, that we press his emaciated hand, and welcome him back to the pleasures of society, to health and to business. And should we be less considerate and kind to those dear departed ones, who, though long tempest-tossed, have at last reached the haven of eternal repose? No, we cannot desire their return to other scenes of trial, or to make a second voyage over the ocean of life, which heaves with so many sorrows, and is filled with so many rocks and shoals upon which eternal hopes are often wrecked. Neither could we wish those beloved ones back to this vale of tears, who were known as great but patient sufferers among us, but whose spirits at length burst the prison that confined them, and soared to yonder glorious world where the inhabitants shall no more say they are sick, and where they now rejoice in the sunshine of a Saviour's love, and inhale an atmosphere which thrills their being with immortal raptures. No, our well beloved, but sainted ones, the Bible has thrown such attractions over that world of light and immortality, that we count those happy who have reached those blissful shores. The quiet tomb where your bodies sleep is a precious emblem of the rest of your spirits from all that afflicted you on earth. For you, all sorrows, disappointments, and woes are

ended. No more shall ye languish and pine on a foreign shore in exile and in pain ; for ye are at home, forever home. Ye have no more losses to mourn, no partings to endure, no temptations to resist, no sins to bewail.

• We still painfully remember our fears and your increasing infirmities, parents of our love, as we saw you passing from the summer into the evening of life. How you yourselves even seemed surprised as your strength abated and your eyes grew dim, and thus broken with age you sought the support of those arms to which you had given life, to assist you in your slow progress to the shade of that elm which your own hands had planted. And there, as we sat together, and looked out over the landscape, so changed by cultivation from its appearance in former years, you spoke to us of by-gone days, of the goodness of Providence, and the companions of your youth. One by one, their friends had passed away, until they stood the lonely representatives of a former generation, like a few oaks that had withstood the storm which prostrated the forest. Fondly did we cling around those venerable forms, and earnestly as ever did we treasure up the lessons of wisdom which fell from the lips of our honored parents. But every day added to their feebleness, until all those images of extreme frailty, so glowingly pictured by Solomon, were visible upon them. The almond tree was flourishing, the grasshopper became a burden, desire failed, and the golden bowl was about to be broken ; and conscious that they would soon go to their long home, they often uttered that touching petition of David — “ Cast me not off

in the time of my old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth." Well do I remember that summer evening, when, for the last time, we surveyed together the scenes around that cherished home; and vivid is the impression of that last utterance that we heard from your lips, as your eyes followed the descending sun: "The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more, until the perfect day." We watched through your sickness, and strove to alleviate those sufferings which we could not command away; and in your decline and exit from this world, we felt the force of the declaration, "the years of our pilgrimage are three-score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four-score; yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away." But ye have gone to the grave, and we will not deplore you, for now you are at rest; and having served your day and generation according to the will of God, ye have fallen asleep, and are gathered with your fathers, while your instructions and example remain to guide us onward in that path which leads from the grave to glory.

Fresh in our minds are your sufferings, cherished companions, fond sisters, and noble brothers. Are you a husband, dear reader, and do you mourn the gentle partner of your bosom? How unutterably sad is your condition! How incalculable your loss! Alas! who can enter that home, from which the sunshine, the music, and the smiles of a beloved wife and mother have fled, without realizing that a dark calamity has befallen that family, and spread a gloom over that scene which painfully affects every observer? And

who can withhold his sympathy from him thus bereaved, whether you see him in his quiet and cheerless home, or in his lonely walks with those who are continually reminding him of the departed one? There may be other kind hearts to yearn over that little flock, but not with the delicate tenderness of a mother. There may be others to throw around the little ones a cherishing care; but it is not the sweet influence of a mother, wooing into beautiful development and growth, the budding affections and springing thoughts of youthful souls, until they stand clothed with excellence. The place and office of a good mother can never be properly supplied to those children. But although he who is thus bereaved, is conscious that a calamity disastrous to his happiness has befallen him; yet should he sustain his mind by those consolatory considerations which the sepulchre suggests. Are you not more competent, and better able to walk the path of life alone, than that feeble and delicate object of your affections? Have you not a stronger arm, and a stouter heart, and more ample resources in your nature, to call to the service of defending and directing those innocent ones who claim your protection and support? And consider, also, how that gentle being was bowed down with unmitigated affliction for years. How her bodily infirmities made her life a weariness, and put gall and wormwood into the cup of her enjoyment; and her constitution so shattered, that every pulsation became a throb of pain. And must not her repose in the tomb be sweet? There she slumbers on, and her peace is not broken by a single disturbing influence. As

you watched with her through that long and painful scene of suffering, from which you knew she could not recover and that separation was inevitable, it was a relief to your sympathising heart, when you saw her sinking sweetly on the bosom of Jesus, and the light of her countenance blending with the glory of another world ; so that, in death she was beautiful, and her image peaceful as an angel in repose ; and you surrendered back to heaven the jewel it had lent. And now the quiet sepulchre speaks to you of the peaceful repose of her spirit ; and those blooming flowers which are nourished by her dust, image to your mind that beautiful immortality which has become her inheritance forever.

Or, it may be that yours is the desolation of the widow, and then you exclaimed, as you looked upon the cold and lifeless form to which you had clung with so much confidence, "How is the strong staff and beautiful rod broken !" And that staff may have crumbled from beneath you at a time when it seemed to you and to others that you had most need of its support. Difficult as it is to administer consolation to those who almost refuse to be comforted, even the sepulchre of a husband may utter messages which will kindle hope in that desolate heart, and breathe a reviving cordial over that drooping spirit. Perhaps, in the inscrutable ways of a gracious Providence, that silent grave may have brought quietness and peace to your soul. While living he may have been the tower of your strength, and the rock of your hopes, and, from a heart brimming with affection, shed around you such a flood of happiness, that you sought no higher blessing, nor

felt the need of a more impregnable refuge. But in that day, when the storm of affliction shook your tower until it fell into a heap of ruins, your spirit, like an affrighted bird driven from its nest, flew about until it rested on the Rock of ages; and as an inhabitant of the clefts of that Rock, it now sings in cadences all the sweeter, because mellowed by bereavement.

“Rock of ages, shelter me!
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood
From thy wounded side that flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

And if you have sought and found rest in the embraces of a Saviour's love, then have the chastisements of the Lord, notwithstanding their painfulness, been the vehicle of priceless good to you, forasmuch as that Providence which opened a grave for your beloved also unlocked the door of your soul's prison, and ushered you into the liberty of God's children. And although your head shall no more repose on the throbbing bosom of that husband, nor his arms encircle your slender form, yet do you pillow your head upon the bosom of Jesus, and underneath you are the arms that sustain the universe. Thus while He, whose judgments are past finding out, has taken thy partner to rest, He has given himself to thee, “for He is the father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow.” And while you praise Him for bestowing a greater treasure than He has taken, you would not recall him whom you cherished so tenderly from his hallowed repose, to pass again through the throes of death.

O! how many precious little innocent ones now enjoy the holy repose of the sepulchre. To them it has indeed become a covert from the storms which blow along the pathway of life. But young as many of these were when death overtook them, and short as their race seemed, some of them suffered more than others who lived to an advanced age. It will not be deemed strange if I give a brief history of one, and thus present a record of a great multitude. For are they not all innocent and lovely? and is not the affection with which they are cherished everywhere the same? It was on the 22d of February, 1845, in a pleasant village on the banks of the Potomac, that we received our first-born from the Lord. An angel-boy; not only lovely in the eyes of his parents, but all who knew him, seemed to be irresistibly drawn to him. The natural comeliness of his faultless person was heightened by unusual intelligence and loveliness of spirit. He grew rapidly in stature and in wisdom; and as his body expanded and his snowy, ample brow hung about with golden ringlets, he formed an image of rare beauty. He was tenderly cherished, and perhaps too much engrossed the affections of his fond parents. But he was a holy child; and of his own accord, before he could articulate words, commenced, and ever after stately observed, secret devotion. In his third year he would cause his little playmates to unite with him in social worship. And as he always exhibited a profound reverence for God and holy things, and delighted in the worship of the sanctuary, we had formed our hopes concerning him. We had pictured a bright future, when we

should see him walking in the way to heaven, and luring others on to glory. For such were our assurances of his piety, gathered from his daily conversations, that we knew God had already established his goings. On one occasion, while his mother read the history of two good boys to him, he exhibited a rare tenderness of conscience for one so young; for, after attentively listening to the end, he seemed deeply affected, and threw his arms about her neck, while his eyes filled with tears, saying, "O ma, I am bad because I am yet so little." Such language from one who had never manifested any disposition to be disobedient or unkind, and in whose life we never had detected any fruits of depravity, showed very clearly that he had been taught of the Holy Spirit. But a mysterious Providence now sent us a sore trial for our faith and his. He was visited with a painful and distressing malady. Ah! how painfully vivid are those long nights and days of suffering before our minds! Thrice did he behold Nature rising from death renewed in vernal beauty, before the disease yielded and gradually withdrew from his body; so that his youth was renewed like the eagle's, and we rejoiced as those who receive one from the dead. But how uncertain are our hopes, and how vain our expectations! A month, a day, an hour may quench them all! Our beautiful boy, one morning as he rose from his slumbers, ran to me and said, "O pa, I had such a pretty dream last night!" On being asked what it was, he replied, "I thought God came down into my room and took me out of my bed, and

carried me up above the moon and the stars, and I saw so many beautiful things, and I saw persons with wings, and they flew, and I flew about too: and all was so bright and pretty!" That which was thus pictured upon his mind in a dream, perhaps occasioned by his meditations, he was permitted to realize in two weeks from that time. The cholera broke out in our midst, and among its victims was our dear child. O! how his sufferings did smite our hearts, and pierce like a sword our very souls! It seemed as though our own nature was dying, and every death-throe in our beloved filled us with fresh anguish. O God! what bitterness there is in the memory of that hour! But he longed for heaven, and we yielded up our heart's treasure, our all, our only boy, and said, "Go, our sweet boy, go! we will no longer hold thee back, since it is painful to thee! May the deliverer come! Thy parents will no longer contend with him to retain thee! Go! then, our first born, our summer child; and if there never more may come a summer to these hearts, still go, that thou mayest have rest. Blessed be thou! and blessed be He also who gave thee to us, and who now taketh thee from us to a better home. Some time, beloved son, we will come to thee. Come, thou good deliverer—come, thou beloved death, and give rest to his heart; but easily, easily death." And the little chest had heaved for the last time, a smile stole upon his countenance and told us that he was with God. But he sleeps far away from us, and we can only express our feelings in the sweet strains of another bereaved one:

“Thoughts of that little lonely grave,
Beneath the green-tree shade,
Come over me with anguish new,
As when it first was made ;
And “ earth to earth,” and “ dust to dust,”
Their fearful sound conveyed.
For there within, my first-born son
Was laid in slumber fair,
So life-like, that I did mistrust
That death was imaged there ;
They heaped the dark mould o’er his head,
And said a holy prayer.
And there he sleeps, so wonder not
That thus my tears will flow ;
That little grave — that lonely grave,—
To leave unguarded so ;
While far away from those sad scenes
I must forever go.”

We can therefore join in the grief of the many bereaved ones, whose homes have been desolated by death, and whose hearts are robed in sackcloth. We can mingle our sorrows as we recall with tears the sufferings of those dear innocent ones. Ah, ye precious lambs, how can we forget that hour when you looked wildly to us for help ; when you clasped your little arms about our neck, and your little hearts were fluttering out their last pulsations upon our anguished bosoms. O ! the scenes of that last hour, and that last look, are forever present to our minds. But ye have overcome ; ye have fallen asleep in Jesus ; and that heavenly radiance that beamed upon your countenance, assured us that angels pillowed your souls to rest ; and those bright and beautiful things which opened to your vision, but which our eyes could not see ; and those celestial melodies which charmed

your infant spirits away, but which vibrated not on mortal ears; all were imaged on your features. Ye glided peacefully away, as the rivulet loses itself in the stream; as dew-drops ye sparkled a little while, until drawn up by the light and warmth of eternal love to mingle with the fellowship and glory of heaven.

“ Happy spirits, ye are fled,
Where no grief can entrance find;
Lull'd to rest the aching head;
Sooth'd the anguish of the mind.
Every tear is wiped away,
Sighs no more shall heave the breast;
Night is lost in endless day,
Sorrow in eternal rest.”

But we will cherish your memories; we will religiously preserve those dear images which the blessed sunlight has pencilled on the steel, but we will not wish you back. No! not even to still these aching bosoms, nor to fill that void which your removal has occasioned, and which all the world cannot replenish. Blessed, happy ones! to have gone so early, and so innocently, from earth to heaven.

O! is it not a great consolation to know that they rest in peace? Had we gone first, we could not have had the same firm assurance that they would follow us to heaven. The young are exposed to many dangers, both from the corruptions of their own hearts, and from the temptations of the world. Sin is a serpent which first charms, and then winds its immense folds around its unsuspecting victims, until it chains them firmly to vice. New sources of corruption are multiplying continually, so that the parent is really happy,

whose family has gone before him to the “rest that remaineth for the people of God.” Well may such exclaim with the patriarch, “the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” For while our sainted ones have escaped all dangers, they are also exempt from those sorrows which are incident to the life of pilgrims on earth. The ills which cling to our humanity, and the distresses which are felt on our progress to eternity; the languor of disease, and the infirmities of age, shall never afflict them with their hard pressures. Only a few storms beat around them in the morning of life, and now their eternal existence is unclouded and glorious. How much more blessed are they, than God’s most favored children on earth! Here we toil; yonder they rest. Here we often weep; there they rejoice; and while we are tossed by temptations, and anguished by fears, eternal sunshine plays around their heads, and ravishing melodies flow from their lips. The distant echoes of that music now vibrate upon my ear, and my heart throbs with emotions of delight under the conscious persuasion that I have furnished one to that company of harpers around the eternal throne — that one, who was “bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh,” stands in the presence of God, and utters the hallelujahs of heaven. And O! how it will relieve the last hour of its bitterness, and kindle raptures in the heart laboring in the throes of death, to know that there are precious ones just beyond Jordan, all bright and glorious, ready to fly into our embraces, and welcome us to the joys of a blissful immortality! Father of all mercies, forgive these yearnings after

our beloved, if they partake of aught that is sinful. Give us a quiet and submissive spirit in every trial. Let the light of thy countenance fall upon every dark scene which thy wisdom ordains for us, and help us always to feel that thou art good, for —

“By our path of trial, thou plantest still
Thy lilies of consolation;
But the loveliest of all, to do thy will
Be it done in resignation.”

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE SEPULCHRE REMINDS US OF THE VALUE AND IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

“It must be so; Plato, thou reasonest well,
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.”

WHEN gazing upon the ruins of a palace, the first emotions of surprise and sadness will be quickly succeeded by reflections connected with the inhabitants that either escaped from the fallen pile, or perished in the ruins. And thus, also, when standing by the sepulchre of a departed one, we may utter our lamentations as we remember the former condition of that body which now moulders under the power of corruption, while our thoughts are associated with the soul that animated it. That body was once instinct with life; it breathed, and moved, and spoke, and performed all those noble functions for which the Creator had designed it. That pulseless heart once swelled with lofty emotions; it was the

home of generous friendships and the empire of holy love. Those feet which, with swift and unfaltering step, trod the path of duty, are motionless. That arm, once nerved with strength and lifted to the execution of exalted purposes, now lies helpless across the manly chest which had heaved in unison with the grand designs of Jehovah. And that eye, which was wont to flame with intellectual fire, is dim; and that brow, on which glowed eloquent thought, is stricken with the pallor of death; and the entire appearance of that house of clay forcibly illustrates the declaration of the Psalmist, "Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." But while contemplating the ruins of the earthly mansion, do we not instinctively ask, where is the spirit, the former inhabitant of this ruined temple? There is, perhaps, no subject which has more universally and intensely occupied the attention of mankind in the different periods of the world's history, than the nature and destiny of the soul. It has always awakened deep and earnest thoughts among the reflecting, and commanded the profound meditations of ancient philosophers. Among these we number as the most prominent, Socrates and Plato, who approximated the solution of the problem of our being, although they did not succeed in their efforts to unravel the mystery in which it was involved. All men had certain internal intimations and vague apprehensions of the soul's future existence; but these pushed their inquiries farther, and obtained more elevated ideas of its nature and destiny.

Job asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live

again?" If not, then religion is a delusion, the Bible a fable, and eternity a dream. Then may we, then *ought* we, to snatch from the passing moments of the present every thing which can be made tributary to our enjoyment. But if we shall exist hereafter, then life becomes a solemn reality; and religion, and the Bible, and eternity, the most momentous subjects that can engage the attention of rational beings. And then, also, will we regard as thrillingly important the questions which so frequently propound themselves to the mind: What am I? Whence have I come, and whither am I going? What is the beginning, the nature, and design of my existence? Does it stop in the tomb, or stretch into the far-beyond of interminable ages? If I regard myself as nothing more than a bit of organized dust, which is to be scattered to the winds by the breath of the destroyer, I will certainly not order my walk and conversation with any reference to the future. But if I recognize in myself an immortal being, I will find my thoughts at once linked and associated with eternal realities; so that very important results are to flow from the manner in which I answer these questions. If a man thinks at all, his reflections must sometimes be connected with his own mysterious being. The history of other objects, and the changes through which they pass to work out their appropriate results, will necessarily suggest inquiries as to his own future. He beholds death at work everywhere in Nature. The forest and the field are stripped of their excellent glory; and the pall of decay, and the blight of desolation, at certain periods mantle the material

creation around him. But he also beholds those things which had descended into the grave of winter reproduced under new and even more beautiful forms. "There is hope of a tree," saith Job, "if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease." And is it possible that man should die and not live again? Shall the soul participate in the decay of the body? Does it cease to exist and to think? and is it struck with eternal sleep, and laid in the darksome grave to wake no more forever?

"Can it be

Matter immortal? And shall spirit die?
 Above the noble shall less noble rise!
 Shall man alone, for whom all else revives,
 No resurrection know? Shall man alone,
 Imperial man! be sown in barren ground,
 Less privileged than grain on which he feeds?

The sentiments embodied in this language come with peculiar urgency to us at the sepulchres of our departed, and demand an explicit answer before we can surrender them with a cheerful heart. To the question, then, which the patriarch propounds, and which is reiterated by the poet, "If a man die shall he live again?" we unhesitatingly and unqualifiedly respond in the affirmative.

The soul carries within its own nature the most conclusive proofs of its immortality. What is the soul? It is not material. It cannot be seen, nor handled; neither is it subject to those laws which govern material things. And on this very ground has the atheist triumphantly asked, how can I believe in the existence of something which is intangible

to my senses? Can that exist whose form eludes my vision and my touch? But we might ask such whether they ever saw the pain which has wrung from them cries of anguish? or whether they can discern and scan the dimensions of those powers whose unseen energies robe our earth with innumerable blessings? Or can they go behind the visible effects of that veiled and mysterious energy which fills the universe with life, and motion, and beauty, and describe its characteristics? And surely none will presume to deny the existence of this hidden force which resides in the organism of nature; for it is manifested on a magnificent scale through all her domain, while it is proclaimed by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, by the royal sound of thunder, and in the voice of the earthquake. And are there not in like manner the most imposing monuments to attest the existence of the soul? Whence are those systems of human law in which we find concentrated the rays of wisdom which lay scattered through the different ages of the world? There could not be a more sublime monument to human genius than our own code of civil jurisprudence. And to what parentage do we ascribe the philosophy, the science, the learning, and the useful inventions which have contributed so largely to the advancement and happiness of the race? Are not all these the offspring of the same parent—the intellect, effects produced by the spiritual and immaterial part of man? Men universally acknowledge a distinction between the products of matter and those which emanate from that intelligent, thinking being which resides in these houses of clay. It is,

moreover, the soul which elevates man above the irrational animal creation. As to his body, he is conscious of all the wants, passions, and appetites of an animal; but "there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty hath given him understanding." And it is this spirit which links him in fellowship with God and his angels. It is this which clothes him with honor, and gives him a position of pre-eminence in relation to other creatures, and makes him lord of the earth. The body is dust, and is irresistibly drawn to its origin; but the soul is conscious of a higher destiny, and aspires to a glorious immortality. It is to his spiritual nature that man is indebted for his conceptions of God; for that which he sees and enjoys; for his ability to invent and project; to control his individual actions, or to preside over the affairs of an empire. For it is the soul which thinks, and reasons, and wills, and acts. Our actions are not the results of a peculiar organization, as infidelity, under the name of science, has sometimes attempted to establish—an assumption which is as foolish as it is wicked, and which must always have a low origin, and a still lower tendency. Such teachings are not the legitimate offspring of science, but a bastard brood which have been falsely baptized scientific; forasmuch as a system never rises to the dignity of a science unless it is based upon immutable deductions and demonstrations, drawn from established and incontrovertible facts; none of which can be claimed for the pratings of infidelity, nor for any of those *perversions* of true science which have been pressed into the service of a bad cause. Fortunately for sound

morality, for religion, and the cause of truth, the abandoned lives of these votaries of evil furnish such a commentary on their system as will forever prevent its adoption by those who are not prepared to plunge themselves and society into hopeless ruin. For what other result could ensue if the cheerless fatalism of ancient times were brought back upon society, to justify the corruptions and vices of the depraved. If mankind could be made to believe that man's moral actions are the results of his physical and intellectual structure, then there would be no escape from the conclusion that all the penalties which government inflicts upon the violators of law, are gross outrages committed upon those criminals; for where is the right to punish, when there is no power to refrain from the commission of crime? The brute and the maniac are not subjects of government; neither do men denounce the fire and steam, or any other destructive element which may have occasioned the loss of life.

If a man's actions are as the leaves and fruit of a tree, the legitimate growth of his nature, and not the offspring of his *will*, he can no longer be regarded as a responsible agent, and therefore cannot be justly punished for any transgression which flows from a constitutional necessity. The admission of this doctrine would constrain us to regard the entire social structure as wrong, and totally subversive of every principle of right, and the acts of the vicious as misfortunes and not crimes. And this would not only conflict with all the interests of society, and strike at the very existence and peace of social life, but is in direct opposition to the Divine

government. For with what justice could God punish the incorrigible sinner, if he is the child of immutable fate, and acts only in conformity with the laws of his being? But such are not the teachings of reason, of conscience, or of the Bible. All these assure us that our actions are the results of a free, intelligent, and therefore accountable, soul within us. It is not a material organization, but a depraved heart and a perverted will, which darken the life of man with crime. Such are the utterances of heaven respecting the soul; and with these the consciousness of man fully coincides; and he is, therefore, placed in a sphere allied to that of angels.

Thought and reflection are also properties peculiar to the mind. Matter can never be made to think. It may undergo refining processes, be turned into a gaseous or fluid state, but through whatever crucible it may pass, and whatever combinations it may be made to assume, it never rises to the dignity of intelligence. Man is the author of wonderful discoveries, and has made almost all things tributary to his will, and subject to his power; but among all the nicely contrived machinery of which he is the architect, there is nothing which is able to endow matter with the faculty of thought. This is a property of the soul, and incontestably demonstrates that it is essentially distinct in its nature from material substances, and therefore, not subject to those laws which control the physical man. It cannot be impaired or destroyed like the body. You may chain the human form, load its limbs with fetters of iron, and so oppress and

waste it by confinement, as to destroy its life by starvation, or torture, but you can forge no fetters with which to manacle the soul. It scorns all the implements of tyranny, and bids defiance to the gloomy cell and the walled prison. From the deepest and darkest dungeon into which the body may be cast, the soul will soon soar away in its thoughts at pleasure to whatever fields of knowledge and enjoyment it may delight to explore. Behold Paul, the ambassador of Christ, while incarcerated at Rome; though cut off from social intercourse with friends, yet was he in sympathy with the Church and in communion with God. His heart never pulsated with freer emotions and loftier purposes, than while from his narrow cell there issued those inspired intellectual creations, which are still going round the globe, publishing the blessings and mysteries of redemption to a lost world. His oppressors had loaded his hands with chains, but they could not bind the faculties of his immortal spirit. His aspirations darted like yiewless angels to the bosom of God, and to the throne of the Mediator, when he penned that triumphant assurance — “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that, which I have committed to Him, against that day.” And the like experience had all “that cloud of witnesses, of whom the world was not worthy.” And it was in view of the spiritual nature of the soul, which placed it beyond the reach of human violence, that the Saviour exhorted his disciples — “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that is able to destroy both soul and body in

hell." The body soon reaches its maturity, then enters upon its decline, and presently sinks into a heap of ruins; but it is not so with the spirit. The dying testimonies of millions have furnished the most conclusive proof, that the soul remains vigorous and unimpaired amid the decays of the body. If any of its faculties seem to fail, or perform their office feebly, we shall find the cause of that feebleness in the weakness of those organs through which they act, and not in any diminished strength of the soul. The great intellects which have shone conspicuously in the civil and religious world, and commanded the homage of mankind, never uttered greater thoughts than when standing on that crumbling precipice, where the interests of time and eternity blend Luther and Knox, Washington and Napoleon, Clay and Webster, never displayed greater intellectual force than near the close of their earthly pilgrimage. And is it not equally true of all, the action of whose minds is not crippled by diseased organs, that while the harbingers of death were busy in taking down their tenement of clay, they uttered thoughts wide and deep as eternity. And should not the testimony of the soul in regard to its undying nature be received, as it is uttered on the very threshold of an endless futurity, and when in the very act of gathering up its energies for the immortal flight? Ah! he who has stood by the couch of the dying righteous, or the wicked, and witnessed the kindlings of unutterable raptures as the glories of heaven unfolded to the vision of the departing; or seen the sullen gloom of despair settling upon the

countenance as a dark and fearful destiny came thronging upon his inner consciousness, can have no skepticism as to the soul's immortality. Said one who was passing to a better home—"My heart is so full of happiness, that it seems to me that I could give out to all the world, and it would still be overflowing."

It has been my painful duty on more than one occasion to witness awful premonitions of despair in the dying whom I was called to attend. The case of a young man to whom I was warmly attached, was of this melancholy character. He was sent in early life to try his fortune in one of our large cities. He obtained a situation in an extensive mercantile establishment, and by his aptness and intelligence, and the interest which he exhibited in the business of his employers, soon won their esteem and confidence. After a short apprenticeship he was placed at the head of the establishment. He displayed unusual business tact, and such were his qualifications for his responsible post, that he managed with great success nearly all the business affairs of the firm. His employers had unbounded confidence in his judgment and honesty, and therefore committed to his trust the care of the house during their absence, or while giving their attention to other duties. But that young man, like too many others, found no home in the families of those merchants, and no watchful counselors in those whom he served. And O! how many youths are there in our large cities, over whom employers exercise no parental care, and no moral influence for good! They scarcely know where they lodge, and perhaps

never inquire what associations they form ; and yet who can doubt that those who are served by these young men, have resting upon them a tremendous responsibility, and that they are solemnly bound to bring them under such religious influences as will save them from the temptations to which they are exposed? Removed from the influences of home, from the light of a mother's smiles, and where the gentle power of the love of brothers and sisters is not felt ; and add to this the small compensation for their labor, and their uncomfortable lodgings, and we need not marvel that so many who go to our large cities uncorrupted soon become familiar with vice in all its forms, and fall victims to their passions.

Such was the condition of my unhappy friend. Having no amusement at his lodgings, he sought the company of the multitude. It was at the theatre that his passions were kindled into burning, and it was there that he formed associations which led him into dishonesty and crime. For a number of years he succeeded in concealing the appropriation made of his employers' funds to his own use, until, emboldened, he ventured upon outlays which excited suspicion and induced inquiry, and his guilt was detected. Finding that a prosecution might follow, he fled ; but the life which he had led had already shattered his constitution, and poisoned the fountain of health. Soon after he was more seriously smitten with disease, and he returned home to die. For a number of weeks did I visit him ; and often, when seated by his bedside, I discovered the workings of intense anguish

in his countenance. But as I was ignorant of his guilt, and accustomed to regard him as one possessed not only of a brilliant mind, but also of a virtuous character, I ascribed those indications of distress to bodily anguish. After repeated efforts to learn his views on the subject of religion and his preparation for eternity, in which I failed, I had painful misgivings as to the correctness of the opinion which I had formed of his character. A few weeks had passed away, and my anxiety for his soul increased, as I could discover no change for the better in his body or mind. One day a messenger came in great haste, and, weeping, begged my immediate attention to poor L. I hastened to the presence of the dying man; and the first words that fell upon my ear as I entered the room were, "O, my friend, I am lost! I am lost!" I drew near and took hold of his hand, and began to speak to him of the mercy and compassion of God. I told him of the tenderness of Jesus, and of the many promises and invitations he had left to the penitent guilty. I assured him that He was a great and compassionate Redeemer;—that He was not only willing, "but mighty to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God through him." But to all that I could urge he replied, "it is too late! too late!" I brought before his mind the thief upon the cross, upon whom Christ had mercy, and entreated him to call upon the Saviour for pardon, but he would not pray. I besought him then, to repeat after me such petitions as I might offer, and he still refused; and finally I urged him by the relation I sustained to him, and

the solemn realities of that eternity into which he was about to enter, to pronounce the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner;" and told him how even one earnest believing prayer might open the gate of heaven to that soul which throws itself upon the bleeding sacrifice of Calvary; but he would not. With an oppressed heart I bowed myself in supplication before the Lord, for my poor friend, and having commended him to the favor and clemency of a merciful Sovereign, I rose and took my departure; but before I reached my carriage, a messenger recalled me. As soon as I entered his chamber, he ordered all his attendants and friends to retire and leave us alone. After they had all withdrawn, he fixed his eyes upon me with great earnestness, and thus addressed me: "Mr. A., you will remember that you are in the chamber of death, and what you are about to hear, is from the lips of a dying man, who has no motive to deceive. I cannot go to eternity with this burden on my soul, and therefore, I sent for you to make certain disclosures of my life." He then gave a statement of his past history, which I will not repeat. At the conclusion of this confession, he drew me nearer to his pillow, and then in tones which seemed the concentration of despair, he added—"O my friend, I am damned." I again endeavored as well as I could (for I was overcome with his distress), to kindle hope in that desolate heart. I suggested to him that these feelings might perhaps be nothing more than sudden terror, induced by his situation, or his mind might be wandering; but to all I could say he answered emphatically and firmly in the

negative. "Sir," said he, "my mind was never clearer than it is at this moment; I am capable of appreciating the kindness of your instructions, but I know my situation, hell has commenced its torments;" and placing his hand upon his bosom, he said, with unutterable anguish—"it is *here*, *hell* is already *here*." He then turned to me, and taking my hand, he thanked me for my attention to him, and said, "Go now, my faithful friend, I know this is painful to you," and he pressed his last farewell. A few hours after that interview he passed into eternity, and was in the hands of a merciful God.

Painfully vivid is that scene imprinted upon my mind; and often have I re-examined every particular connected with the last hours of my kind but unhappy friend L——, to see if I could not gather even a feeble hope, that he might have been under the influence of delirium induced by bodily pain; but there was the clear eye, flashing with all the steady intelligence that emanates from a mind acknowledging the dominion of reason, and just as he had looked a thousand times upon me. I have but one observation to make in connection with this melancholy, but unembellished record of the last hours of an amiable and gifted young man, and it is this. If the testimony of the dying in relation to worldly business is received in the highest courts of human judicature, as the most reliable evidence which can be produced in a cause that is tried, are we not warranted to regard such testimony when it relates to the nature and destiny of the soul as stamped with the most undoubted veracity? I

confess that to my mind those premonitions of the realities of a coming eternity, constitute an incontrovertible proof of the soul's immortality.

But another argument for the endless existence of man's spiritual being, may be drawn from the nature of material substances at which I have already hinted. It is universally conceded by philosophers that matter is indestructible. You may change its form and diminish its bulk, but you cannot destroy it. The oak of centuries may be hewn down and reduced to ashes, but this is only changing its form, and not annihilating its material properties. The water which flowed in its pores will be exhaled into the air; the clouds will carry it on swift wing to the far-off mountain, where they shed it down to feed the fountain which replenishes the stream that carries its tribute of waters to the ocean. The heat which it contained will pass into that mass of caloric which warms the earth and promotes the growth of plants and trees. And thus all the solids and fluids of that oak are mingling again with those kindred elements which produce another of its kind. And if such be the privilege and mission of matter, is the presumption reasonable that the spirit in man, the immediate offspring of Deity, should sink into a cheerless nonentity after its connection with the body is dissolved?

“ Look nature through: 'tis revolution all;
All change; no death. Day follows night, and night
The dying day; stars rise, and set, and rise;
Earth takes the example. See the summer gay,
With her green chaplet and ambrosial flowers,
Droops into pallid autumn: winter grey

Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,
Blows Autumn and his golden fruits away,
Then melts into the spring; soft spring, with breath
Favonian, from warm chambers of the south,
Recalls the first. All, to reflower, fades;
As in a wheel, all sinks to reascend,
Emblems of man, who passes, not expires."

This image is as charming as it is true of our life and destiny. As all things in nature die only to live again, and as the stars of heaven retire from our view to shine on other lands, so man dieth that he may rise to a nobler existence; and the light of his soul is withdrawn from observers on earth that it may shine among the blessed in God's presence forever. And is it not consoling to bereaved ones to know that their departed live? O, yes, that beautiful immortality which is not obscured by a cloud nor swept by a single storm can rebuild our wrecked happiness; for even its hope, that glows within our souls, brings to the weary and faint refreshing draughts from the river that flows from the midst of the throne of God and the Lamb. For we know that our sainted are gone, and that we are following after to that cloudless home where decay and blight never fall upon the inhabitants, but where all flourish in immortal bloom; so that the brief existence here, and all the calamities which darken it, shrink into insignificance when placed by the side of that glowing immortality for which all the holy are destined.

The immortality of the soul may also be inferred from its constitutional frame-work. There is nothing in all material and animated nature that resembles it in its structure. What a noble being it is! How unlike all other objects! Behold

its reasoning faculties — the judgment, the will, the imagination, the memory, and conscience. All these powers perform distinct functions, yet act in concert, and produce amazing results. Reason solves the most difficult problems ; and its deductions are adopted or rejected, according to the dictates of conscience. The memory is its great store-house where its treasures accumulate, and are hoarded for eternity. The imagination wings its flight through immensity, and gathers within its circling sweep the universe. The thoughts and affections soar into the sanctities of heaven, and with bright spirits, cluster around the throne of eternal love. It is fitted for reflection ; and its meditations may compass earth and heaven, and range from the worm to the archangel, and from the flowers of the field to those which are “the poetry of the skies.” Its contemplations may stretch from the newly-created Eden, flushed in its sinless glory, to the smouldering wreck from which the “new earth” shall rise resplendent with righteousness. It is qualified to hold communion with other intelligences distinguished or humble in the distant past or the far-off future, with men, with angels, and with God. Surely such a wonderful structure was not reared by Almighty power to be shattered by the stroke of death into a heap of ruins, before it had time to fill out its immense proportions. Is it possible that the soul’s destiny lies within the limits of this earthly existence? Would such a supposition be in harmony with reason, and consonant with that plan of Divine procedure which we witness in His other creations? It is incredible, because in conflict with

those great and wise principles which run through all His works and government. For, what do we see in the soul? A being which has upon it the marks of an incipient greatness and grandeur which must not only burst all mortal fetters and earthly limits, but which clearly demand a boundless eternity for their appropriate development and full maturity. There are the dawns of a splendor, and the magnificence of a glory in its intellectual and moral exercises, which infallibly intimate a future and higher sphere of activity, in which these will rise to their true dignity, and radiate their destined effulgence. All the aspirations and impulses of the mind clamor for enlargement. Like a fettered prisoner, it is impatient of its bonds, and labors to burst those barriers which now circumscribe the compass of its action. It spurns all the offerings of earth as utterly unsuited to fill its immense capacities, or to furnish it with that largeness of bliss for which it yearns. Its desires and affections are so insatiable, and seek for such an exalted good, that they pass above and beyond all earthly pomp and all human greatness, to gather within their compass God and eternity.

We regard, therefore, this peculiarity of the soul as one which adds force to our argument, viz. : that, unlike all the creatures around it, it never attains to its full maturity on earth. When we examine the animal and insect tribes which throng this world, we discover that unless their existence is violently cut short, they all arrive at the perfection of their being. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the field are

now what they have always been. The law of instinct which guides them to the food suited to their natures, remains unchanged. The plumage of the eagle and of the dove, as well as their dispositions and habits, are the same now as when they left paradise to roam over the earth. The swallow builds her nest in the same manner as when she found a place for her young near the altar of God. The stork and the ant afford now the same instruction to the thoughtless and slothful, as when Jeremiah and Solomon cited their conduct as a reproof to Israel. The beaver has made no improvement in the building of his dam, nor the bee in forming the honey-comb, since these creatures first commenced their toil. And the pursuits and instincts of all the inferior animated creation, are precisely the same as they were six thousand years ago. They arrive in a given time ranging from a moment to a few years, at a point beyond which none of their kind will ever pass. But it is not so with man: he knows not what a full-grown soul is. From paradise onward to the present period, there has been a steady improvement in all that relates to the human species. Agriculture, arts, government, commerce and education have all risen from a feeble and imperfect infancy, to their present advancement, and all of them are daily pushing towards a higher degree of perfection. The range of human knowledge has been widening from age to age, and man's intellectual and moral exertions are enlarging as the race advances in civilization and religion. And in this we find conclusive proof, that all the elements of our spiritual being are suscep-

tible of indefinite improvement, and that upon all the intellectual and moral faculties of man, there is written the law of unlimited progress, which furnishes an impregnable argument for the immortality of the soul. For if all things else which have come from the hands of the infinitely perfect Creator, grow in conformity with those laws which govern their existence until they have passed into full maturity; is it presumptuous to claim the same destiny for the soul, the noblest of all His works? Can the thought be entertained, or the stupendous folly find an advocate, that an all-wise God would annihilate the spirit that claims kindred with Himself, and that too, before it has reached the grand theatre of its immortal exertions? Perish the thought, for it has no foundation but in those corruptions of man, which make him afraid to live. Every theory which predicates the extinction of the soul, is insane, at war with the Divine character, and in conflict with all our conceptions of the fitness of things. Our consciousness, together with all the yearnings of our being, rise up to demonstrate our immortality. And this assurance is not peculiar to men of the present generation, but is in harmony with the convictions of mankind in all the past ages of the world. There is no nation, whether barbarous or civilized, savage or cultivated, pagan or Christian, that has not left memorials of its faith in the soul's immortality.

And all these considerations favourable to another and a better life beyond the grave, are confirmed and established by the holy oracles. The scriptures assure us that when God had formed man, "He breathed into him the breath of life,

and man became a living soul." The soul is therefore the immediate offspring of Deity, a spark from the Infinite Intelligence, a part of the Everlasting God; and it might be as easily proved that He who formed it will cease to exist, as to show that the spirit will not survive the wreck of the body. "The dust shall return to dust, but the spirit to God who gave it." The Prophets, our Lord Jesus, and His Apostles, all have clearly and incontrovertibly set forth this doctrine. A denial of our immortality would divest the Bible and Providence of their solemn investiture and awful meaning, and destroy the ground-work of Christianity, while it would leave us no assignable reason for the many and mighty agencies now in force to fit man for that nobler existence, which lies beyond the grave and which is immutably certain.

From the nature and destiny of the soul, we may draw invaluable consolations for the bereaved. To know that the souls of our beloved escape unhurt from the ruins of the body, is a reflection full of comfort. To be assured by the profoundest deductions of reason, and by the testimony of Almighty God, that the departed, if possessed of those qualifications of purity which fit them for heaven, live with Him forever, is cheering beyond expression. The eagle which escapes from its cage, soars not with so much exultation into his native skies, as those weary spirits did into the presence of Jehovah. But among the many consolatory reflections with which the bereaved may comfort themselves, we may submit the following.

They should remember that the ransomed are delivered

from all those impediments to the acquisition of knowledge, which embarrassed their efforts on earth. Every barrier is broken down; every obstruction which hindered the inflows of knowledge removed. And as knowledge brings pleasure, and especially that which consists in clear perceptions of the Divine character, we see how this will contribute to their happiness. As the soul moves in its contemplations over the infinite dimensions of its eternal home, and discovers increased beauty and loveliness in all its progress amid the illimitable wonders of Jehovah, it will be conscious of a similar enlargement of its joy. As its eye darts over the unveiled glories of immensity, and its ear drinks in the melodies of heavenly rapture, it will be filled with a corresponding increase of bliss.

The redeemed are also free from all imperfections. They will have no sins to bewail, no errors to lament; but as they are perfectly holy, they are perfectly happy. And as our happiness is proportionate to the extent and purity of the range of our intellectual and moral faculties, those must be infinitely blessed, from whom all things are removed which could in any wise interfere with their exertions. What a happy condition is theirs! what an unclouded and unending felicity is their portion! When a beloved child, or a cherished friend goes to a distant land, and we receive a communication in which he describes the healthfulness of the climate, the beauty of the landscape, the richness and excellence of its productions, the elevated condition of society, and his improved circumstances and still brighter prospects, do we not feel contented when we know that he who languished in the

home he has left, now enjoys health and prosperity? Such a communication of the happy condition of the sainted has God sent us. "They hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither is there any more pain." And shall not these utterances from heaven in regard to the glorified ones around God's throne, fill us with a pious resignation to the Divine will, and inspire our hearts with joy and peace in the midst of our desolated homes? O! yes; we may comfort ourselves, for although they have died, they live again, and that forever. The former temple is in ruins, but the latter into which they have entered is more glorious, because filled with the presence and glory of God. And should not the fact that we are heirs of the same immortality, reconcile us to the afflictions and trials which are needed to prepare us for that glorious future? Should not the prospect of entering that unbounded scene of glory stretching through the interminable ages of eternity, kindle such purposes, and give birth to such a course of preparation as under the blessing of the Holy Spirit will fit us to reign with God forever? And as expectants of such a destiny, should we not fly from, and loathe every thing which could mar the hope of such a brilliant future? O! if we are the "adopted children of God and heirs with Jesus Christ," then are we more highly blest, than he who passes to the most powerful earthly throne, and should therefore rejoice in every tribulation which diminishes the distance between us and a crown of life. We are immortal, and what need we care for the titled distinctions of earth? What is the grandeur of this world to him who is so soon to enter

upon an immortality full of glory? God grant, that through all our wanderings, the conviction that we are preparing for a blessed or wretched futurity, may exert its restraining and purifying influences upon our minds, that while threading our weary pilgrimage through this life, we may realize to what a noble destiny we are born. And may the truth of thy deathless nature, impenitent reader, hang with all its tremendous weight and significance about thy heart, until that heart becomes contrite and holy, for —

“Immortality o’ersweeps
All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peals
Like the eternal thunders of the deep
Into thine ears this truth — Thou liv’st forever.”

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION DIVESTS THE SEPULCHRE OF ITS TERRORS, AND BRINGS CONSOLATION TO THE BEREAVED.

“Blest are they
That earth to earth entrust; for they may know
And tend the dwelling whence the slumberer’s clay
Shall rise at last; and bid the young flowers bloom,
That waft a breath of hope around the tomb,
And kneel upon the dewy turf and pray.”

SWEETLY and soothingly did those words of hope in the burial service, “looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall raise his followers to the participation of his own happiness and glory in heaven,” fall upon our ears when we stood mournfully by the open graves of our departed. They breathed a reviving influence over our anguished hearts; and on wings of hope did our thoughts speed to that morn which shall yet burst upon our world, when Jesus Christ shall come, “who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;” “when this corruptible shall put on incorruption,

and this mortal, immortality ;” and we said, “He doeth all things well.” With this glorious prospect have millions cheerfully bid farewell to earthly friends and beloved scenes, and fallen asleep in Jesus. In the hope of the resurrection have bereaved Christians laid parents, husbands, wives, children, brothers, and sisters, into the silent grave without a murmur against Providence. But upon what basis does this hope rest? It should assuredly be broad and deep to sustain such precious interests as those which repose upon it. And it is a source of gratulation to know that neither conjecture nor analogy forms its only ground-work, but that it has for its foundation the Rock of immutable truth. The resurrection of the dead is emphatically a doctrine of revelation. It lies beyond the province of reason. It is true that caution should be exercised when predicating what could, or could not, fall within the circle of human discovery, seeing that one age cannot fix the range of intellectual research for another, forasmuch as the mind is in a state of progression, and is daily making some new and startling discoveries. Yet, notwithstanding all the brilliant triumphs of the intellect in mechanism, in science, and in every branch of learning which should check the presumptuous, who might venture to fix limits beyond which the light of reason could never travel, it is not arrogant to assume that the resurrection of the body is one of those mysteries which would have escaped our knowledge had not the light of revelation shone into the tomb. It is not improbable that men, in all ages, had their conjectures, and may have had some intimations about the future glorifica-

tion of our humanity. This appears probable from two considerations. First: from the fact that the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body are intimately blended. Man could not conceive of the soul as existing in the spirit-world or the invisible state, independently of a material organization. We always invest good and evil spirits with some bodily form which is present to our perceptions when we think of them. And in consequence of our imperfect apprehensions of spiritual beings, even God is present in our conceptions of Him under a certain form. And, therefore, "His fulness" is said "to dwell in Christ bodily," while light is made "the garment of Deity," and the "creation His house." Angels are represented in Scripture under various forms, but mostly in the human, with appendages of wings. If they are sent as ministers of wrath to execute the judgments of heaven, they are robed in warlike armor, or shrouded in the tempest, clothed with lightning, or moving in the pestilence. The angel which was commissioned to destroy a portion of Israel, as a judgment upon David for violating the command of God, which forbade him to number the people, appeared in mid-heaven over Jerusalem, with a drawn sword. The one that appeared unto Jacob is described as a man wrestling with the patriarch. It is not necessary for us here to inquire whether they could, or could not have accomplished their work, or discharged the functions of their mission in a viewless and impalpable state; but it is of some importance for us to know that when they did make their appearance they were clothed in a bodily shape. And

if the form was even not essential to the execution of the Divine purposes, it was certainly necessary to produce the intended effect upon the minds of those who were to be impressed by their visible appearance. And as we ascribe a certain form to angels, so, in like manner, do we to the glorified in heaven whenever we think of them. This must always be the case, unless we adopt the Pantheistic notion of spirit, which maintains that the soul, as soon as it leaves the body, loses its identity, and dissolves into the Divine essence. But this would be in conflict with our individual consciousness; for, whenever our minds wander to the distant home of the sainted, and we see them in their adorations and other delightful occupations in that world of glory, they have the same forms and features which were peculiar to them while living. The ancient Egyptians, who believed in the indestructibility of the soul, supposed that when it quitted the body it passed into some animal, and after its death into another, and so on, until it had performed a transmigratory course of three thousand years, and was then absorbed by Deity. And the doctrine of transmigration, doubtless, originated in the impossibility of conceiving of the soul's existence independently of a bodily form; and regarding it as unfit to pass directly from its first habitation into the Divine nature, they sent it upon this long pilgrimage to obtain the necessary purity before it could be commingled with God. All nations, moreover, exhibited great reverence for the remains of their departed. Some embalmed their dead; and others who burned the mortal remains of their

friends, carefully collected the ashes and put them into urns, which were religiously preserved; while those who buried their dead manifested an equal regard for the mouldering dust of beloved ones. And why was all this care, and to what can we ascribe this reverence for the ashes of their kindred, if they had not some dim conceptions of a mysterious destiny which they believed to hang around the body? While, therefore, we regard the resurrection of the dead as a doctrine which never could have been clearly understood without the light of revelation, we cannot escape the conviction that a vague impression of some future resuscitation and glorification of the human body was at all times present to the consciousness of mankind.

But let us dismiss all conjecture, and pass out from the field of uncertainty, to tread that sure ground on which the light of God's infallible word shines. We will take the holy oracles of truth, "as a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path," in our examination of this subject. It has been asserted by some eminent Biblical critics, that there are no traces of this doctrine in the early Hebrew Scriptures. They profess their inability to find it in the Pentateuch, the books of Samuel, Kings, Job, the Psalms and others. Without controverting the views which these writers have advanced on a number of passages in the Psalms, in which Theodoret and many other distinguished men believe there is a clear recognition of the doctrine, we are reluctant to yield, without a struggle, that well-known and beautiful passage in Job, which speaks so pointedly on this subject. I cheerfully

grant that we should be slow to hold an interpretation of any passage of scripture, which is in direct conflict with the views of such men as Jahn, Eichorn, De Wette, Grotius, Le Clerk and others ; but as the right of opinion is inalienable, so is the liberty of expressing our convictions unimpaired by any amount of testimony, however respectable, which may stand opposed to our views. And we cannot but believe that some more recent commentators have adopted the interpretation of these theologians of this passage, rather from the want of independence of thought, than from obedience to their convictions ; for great names are invested with a secret power which often insensibly determines the mind in favor of their views. Notwithstanding, then, the number of learned expositors who regard the language of Job in the nineteenth chapter, 25, 26, and 27th verses, as expressing a hope of his restoration to bodily health, and deliverance from the pressure of his calamities, we are clearly of the opinion that he had reference to the resurrection of his body from the grave. It is maintained by those who differ from this view, that such an interpretation does not fall in with the *design* of the poem, the whole argument of which is based upon a misconception of the design of affliction. Granting that the friends of Job labored under a misconception of the cause and object of affliction, and that this was the basis of the argument, it does not follow that every part and passage of the entire production must necessarily and rigidly conform to the design of the poem. There are many things incidentally, and sometimes designedly mentioned, ay, doctrines stated and illustrated

in this and almost every other book extant, which would be deprived of their legitimate meaning under the force of this rule. All who read the Scriptures with ordinary attention, are familiar with the fact, that the inspired writers are often very sudden and even abrupt in their transitions from one subject to another. Take, as an illustration, the Psalms, and many of the Prophecies, where the particular design of the writer cannot be misapprehended, and yet we frequently find in the midst of a prophecy, the statement of some general doctrine, or the utterance of some glorious and startling truth, not legitimately connected with its primary design. But, perhaps, with the large majority of men, this passage itself is its best vindication. There it stands out luminous upon the ancient book, as a beacon-light in a dark world; and to assign to it a different meaning from that which lies so obviously on its surface, would be to obscure one of the brightest gems upon that oldest of all records. After touching appeals to his friends, to awaken their sympathies in view of his afflictions, which to all human appearance were rapidly carrying him to the grave, he gives utterance to the assurances of his faith. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." As it is not my object to enter into an extended discussion of this passage, I will simply remark that he could speak with as much certainty of his resurrection, as he could of his restoration to

health ; inasmuch as, in either case, he could only predict such an event under the tuition and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Both events were involved in the obscurity of the future, and his recovery from affliction was not more probable than his resurrection from the grave. And many other considerations might be added, which would multiply the difficulties of the other interpretation. And why should we blot out one of the first and most brilliant lights that shines out of the bosom of antiquity, to disperse the gloom of the sepulchre, and to cheer the afflicted and dying with the sure conviction that they have a living Redeemer who will rebuild the fallen tabernacle of the soul at the last great day ; and this, too, because in the estimation of a few, the doctrine of the resurrection falls not in with the *design* of the poem. No ! we will not, we cannot so easily and upon such slight grounds, surrender it. Our affections cling to it, and we will rear a wall of living, hopeful, and believing hearts around it, that shall cherish it as a precious legacy from our heavenly father.

From this brief notice of the testimony of the book of Job in favor of the resurrection, we will direct the attention of the reader to such proofs as are undisputed. The passages are numerous, clear, specific, and incontrovertible, in which this doctrine is taught. In the prophecy of Isaiah it is written : “Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they arise ; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” In Ezekiel, chap. 37, we have a vivid

picture of the restoration to national existence and prosperity of Israel, wasted and broken by their captivity ; but while this was unquestionably the primary design of that prophecy, it also proclaimed the power and purpose of God, as these will be illustrated in the general resurrection of the dead. But this doctrine, like the promises of the Messiah, grows clearer as we come down from the beginning in the development of the plan of Redemption, until it bursts upon the world in all its effulgence. In Daniel it is announced, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake ; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This passage is easily understood without any comment.

But whatever may have been the alleged obscurity in which this doctrine is involved in the Old Testament, it manifestly forms one of the most prominent of the Gospel. It was the frequent theme of discourse both of our Lord and His Apostles. Among the many declarations of the fact itself, His address to the inquiring Greeks who sought Him at Jerusalem, is designed to illustrate this great mystery. The splendor of His miracles, and the wisdom of His discourses had spread his fame far and wide. Never had it been known among men that a mere word recalled the dead to life ; that disease shrank from the presence and bidding of man ; and that a mere touch opened the eyes of the blind, or caused the warm blood to resume its circulation in the withered arm, before Jesus of Nazareth appeared in Judea. Need we wonder, then, that these miracles, in connection

with the discourses of our Lord, attracted even the Greeks, who, perhaps, hoped to find in Him the messenger for whom their Plato longed, when he said, "We have need that one of the gods should teach us." And as His hour of suffering was near, and all who had come to Jerusalem would witness His crucifixion, it was fit that He should prepare the minds of His hearers for that event, lest His death might stagger and overthrow their faith. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also be my servant." Here He brings forward the resurrection as the broad foundation upon which the hope of His followers should repose. A doctrine, perhaps, somewhat startling to the Greeks, but only the full utterance of what sometimes seemed obscurely present in their philosophy. For all nations who had among them those who were given to profound meditation and study, generally conceived Nature to be animated by the breath of the Almighty, and sustained by an invisible and eternal energy; and, therefore, might recognise in its various phenomena symbols of those truths which pertained to the spiritual world; and particularly might the revivification of things dead in Nature suggest a similar return to life of the body which sank into the tomb. But if this might be deemed too great a triumph even for profound thinkers, it will not be

denied that the distance which they had travelled by the light of reason was so much of an approach to the great truth, that it had fitted their minds for the announcement of this doctrine of Christianity. They were not ignorant that they must die, but granting that they had no knowledge of that life which springs forth afresh from death ; they yet saw the same thing continually transpiring in Nature, and it was, therefore, not so difficult to believe that a like privilege awaited man. The seed must rot in the earth if it is to be reproduced ; and thus man must submit to this inevitable law of Nature, and undergo a change in the tomb if he would live forever. In view of such considerations, His death and burial, as our great forerunner, had nothing in them ultimately to overthrow the faith of His disciples ; forasmuch as He rose from the tomb and reappeared to them, and ascended with His glorified humanity to heaven, thus opening for his followers a passage from this world to a glorious immortality. This illustration, then, with which the Saviour has furnished us, divests death of its horrors, and takes away much of its bitterness, and even makes it desirable, since it has become the only passage to a blessed future.

The truth of this doctrine is then based upon God's infallible word. Jesus Christ in the passage already cited, as also in a multitude of others, distinctly avows and declares that the dead shall rise. "I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice ; and shall come forth, they that have

done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." "And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." He confirmed the truth of these and similar declarations in the dominion He manifested over death and decay, by restoring to life the son of the widow of Nain and others; but especially in raising Lazarus, who had been four days in the tomb. But this doctrine is rendered impregnable by His own resurrection from the grave. That his crucifixion resulted in death, there can be no question. And even shameless infidelity ought to blush, for uttering a contrary opinion. It is a pity that men whose corruptions compel them to be infidels, should attempt to impeach history. It is not manly to question the truth of well-authenticated records, and this would never have been attempted in the present case, did not infidelity divest its votaries of all the exalted attributes which belong to noble minds. Who could *really* believe that He was not dead? He was in the hands of His enemies, and was subjected to such torture and suffering, that it is as idle as it is wicked for those hostile to Christianity to deny the fact. And that He rose and frequently appeared to His disciples prior to His ascension to heaven, is as well attested as any other historical fact which has ever been offered to the faith of mankind. Those who have testified to His resurrection, could have had no motive to deceive themselves and others; for their identification with Christianity was not the result of ambitious

aspirings, or the prospect of worldly honor or gain, but an honest conviction of its truth. What inducement could there have been to sacrifice their earthly all and peril their lives, simply to fasten an imposture upon the world? Could men brave the terrors of martyrdom, the gloom of prisons, and the tortures of the rack, whose hopes of immortality were groundless upon the supposition that the resurrection of Jesus was not true? The witnesses to its truth were also of unimpeachable character, and whatever their enemies might have thought and said of their religion, they could not allege any thing against the character of the disciples. They gave ample proof of their integrity and conscientiousness in all their convictions. And that they were competent to give a truthful testimony on this subject, is evident from the fact that they had been the intimate companions of Jesus for three years, and had a thousand times looked upon His person and heard his voice; and when he appeared to them for the first time in their secluded chamber, they at once recognized their Master. And in order to dispel the idea that it was a mere apparition, He invites them to touch and handle Him, that they might know that it was the actual body in which He had suffered upon the cross. And at every subsequent time that He showed himself to them, they had abundant opportunity of attentively regarding the person of the Redeemer. And that none might dispute His resurrection, He appeared at one time to about five hundred brethren, and last of all to Paul as that apostle informs us.

If, moreover, we examine the records of apostolical labor,

we shall discover that all their preaching ultimately rested upon this cardinal truth. In that masterly discourse which Paul delivered to the cultivated Athenians on Mars-hill, he enforces the truths which he had uttered by the resurrection of Jesus. "God now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." Peter, in the very commencement of his epistle, breaks forth in the following beautiful language. "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." From a multitude of passages which might be cited, it is evident that the entire and magnificent structure of the gospel is based upon the resurrection of Christ. The apostle Paul in his admirable vindication of this doctrine in 1 Cor. chap. xv. administers not only a masterly rebuke to the errors which had crept into the church, but distinctly states that the truth of Christianity has no other foundation upon which to repose, if this were taken away. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then, also, they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." It is manifest not only from this incomparable and triumphant vindication in this chapter, but from the whole gospel, that they attached the highest value to this doctrine. It constituted a prime article in their faith, and was full of consolation to them in all their trials; for it

peopled the future with a glory, the grandeur of which relieved their sufferings of their gloom and poignancy. And its importance can certainly not be overrated by rational beings, for it underlies all our theology, and is the groundwork of all immortal hopes. It connects the present and the future, and gives significance to all that is mysterious and solemn in the incarnation, the life and death of our Saviour. It breathes life into all the doctrines of the gospel, and makes the sacred page radiant with the hopes of eternal existence. For if the dead rise not, how can we vindicate the scheme of redemption, how solve the problem of our life, or reconcile the imperfect state of man in this world with the other works of God, which attain to their appropriate perfection? And, deprived of that hope which causes the ashes of our sainted to glow with immortality, and which opens to the contemplation of man beyond the grave scenes of ineffable grandeur and glory, what would there be left to animate the Christian with fortitude under trials, or to comfort him amid the wreck of earthly hopes? Very truly does the apostle observe — “If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, then are we of all men most miserable.” For if Christianity is a fiction, death an eternal sleep, and immortality a dream, then may we adopt the Epicurean adage as a principle of action, — “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” But as this is absurd and the doctrine of fools, we being immortal should live as immortals; — live in accordance with the dictates of the laws, the elements and aspirations of our being, all of

which unite their testimony with reason and revelation in proclaiming that we shall live *forever*.

It is a precious consolation to the Christian that this body, in which he groans and suffers, in which he moves and acts, and whose members are consecrated to God and occupied in His service, shall become immortal. That this weak and frail tenement of the soul, so disordered and anguished by the effects of sin, shall at last rise from its humble dwelling in the dust, perfectly holy, and eternally triumph with the spirit in the presence of Jehovah. And equally precious is it to believe that God will reanimate the dust of His saints, and that they shall burst forth from the tomb arrayed in the glory of Christ. He, as the first fruits of the resurrection, has already ascended in His humanity to the presence of the Father, where His glorified body appears as the pledge for the fulfilment of the promise in all His followers, and as a confirmation of the truth that all who are joined by a living faith to Jesus shall be raised to the same happiness and glory in heaven. In view of this fact, Paul exhorts the Thessalonians in the following language: "But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-

angel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." With such words, breathing exalted hopes, he would comfort those who were sorrowing for their departed. It is not the will of heaven that we should remain unaffected by afflictions, for this would defeat their end ; and there is no law in our nature which demands stoical indifference in our bereavements, for our sorrows are only outflows of a smitten soul ; but religion comes to our aid, to soothe and moderate our grief by its solid and exhaustless comforts, and by the glorious assurance that those who go down into the house appointed for all the living shall rise again. Blessed, glorious announcement, which pours such light into the tomb, and such precious consolation into our hearts !

The apostle John gives us in the Apocalypse a vivid picture of the transactions connected with the coming of Christ. When He shall come upon His great white throne, and the heavens and the earth shrinking from His presence, He shall call back to life the sleeping millions. The voice which once commanded and the universe arose, and the heavens were stretched out, and all the glowing orbs took up their line of march, will again be heard at the final day ; and as its vibrations travel over the earth, every grave will fly open, and every sepulchre will be uncovered. What an animating spectacle will the morning of the resurrection pro-

duce. With the breaking of its light there will be a stirring of life in every cavern where a victim of death reposed; while shouts of triumph and lamentations of despair are filling the air, and mingling with the furious roar of burning elements, the crash of worlds, and the groans of an expiring, sin-burdened creation, until all are dissolved into quiet submission at the feet of the great Redeemer, to hear their eternal doom. And not only the earth, but the "sea shall give up its dead." Millions have gone down into its unfathomable depths. It is the common highway of the nations of the earth. It is the bond which holds in union and friendly intercourse the large family of nations; while it is also the vast sepulchre where all kindreds have laid a portion of their dead. It is the great tomb of nations. Many who have been borne over its dark blue waves in search of pearls, and engaged in commerce, have gone down into its hidden caverns. Multitudes who fell in naval conflicts, and the victims of marine disasters, are committed to its trust. There the vessel that was freighted with hundreds of immortals was overtaken by the storm and shattered, and sunk with her precious cargo. There the pestilence has dropped upon the deck like a viewless and dark spirit, and smitten those wandering to a new and distant home. To the sea has the emigrant committed his beloved one, in the hope of the resurrection. The many disasters along the reefy and rock-bound coasts, as well as the fire and tempest on the open sea, are annually sending their thousands to this tomb. O, what precious treasure does the sea hold over for the resurrection morn! Much of silver,

of gold, and costly gems, have gone down into its bosom, and this wealth may lie unclaimed; but all in whom the breath of immortality was found must be surrendered on demand. O, thou sepulchre of nations! thou capacious and unfathomable grave of the world! thou shalt give up thy dead!

“What wealth untold,
Far down and shining through thy stillness lies!
Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
Won from ten thousand royal argosies.
Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful main,
Earth claims not these again!

Give back the lost and lovely! those for whom
The place was kept at board and hearth so long;
The prayer went up through midnight's breathless gloom,
And the vain yearnings woke 'midst festal song!
Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown,
But all is not thine own!

To thee the love of woman hath gone down;
Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
O'er youth's bright locks and beauty's flowery crown!
Yet must thou hear a voice — Restore the Dead!
God shall reclaim His precious things from thee!
Restore the Dead, thou Sea.”

Contemplate for a moment, the grandeur of that scene! Let us shift ourselves forward to that marvellous and glorious spectacle. The night of death is past, the long silence of the tomb is broken, and the lustre of the morning of redemption bathes the world with its glory! And although we cannot with all the aids which imagination and imagery furnish, rise in our apprehensions to the proper dignity and glory of that day; we may behold faint reflections, and catch a few

glimpses from the manifestations of Divine power, as exhibited in the material world. As autumn is an emblem of death, so is spring an image of the resurrection. And it is the certainty with which we look forward to the renewal of the face of nature, that reconciles us to the autumnal decay of the beautiful things of earth. Without this assurance, it would indeed be a melancholy spectacle to witness our forests disrobed, our flowers fade, all the decorations of earth perish, and see all things passing into the desolations of winter. And thus also, would death be a dark and cheerless destiny, could we not look forward through its gloom and see the light of the resurrection morn flashing upon our vision. And shall not this hope cheer bereaved hearts? Our dead shall rise again. That aged parent who went down to the narrow house bent with the weight of infirmities and years, shall renew his youth; that sweet sister whose last faint echoes still linger on our ear, shall again speak to us; and that little angel form which we so often encircled, shall yet again fly to our embraces, for they shall rise again. God has so declared; and from the annual recurrence of that season which robes in fresh glory our hills and valleys, He furnishes incontestable proof of His faithfulness and ability in the performance of his promises. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." And if a feeble faith should sometimes be staggered when it surveys the difficulties which unsanctified reason has thrown around this doctrine of our holy religion, it may recruit its energies and reassure the heart by con-

templating those wonders which Almighty power causes to transpire with unfaltering certainty in the world around us. We cannot see, neither can we understand the operations of that mysterious energy which is at play in the production of the phenomena of nature, and yet we witness and acknowledge its effects. And is it any more difficult to believe that God can, and that God will raise his sleeping saints to life and glory? "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" O! it is not incredible nor impossible, since the veracity and omnipotence of God are pledged for its fulfilment. He will rebuild those fallen structures. Believe it, believe it, and be comforted, ye that mourn around the graves of the lovely and the beautiful. Though their frames are wasting away, and their comeliness is lost in the mould of the tomb, they shall rise with a far more excellent glory than ever adorned them while bearing their earthly burdens. They will rise with immortal natures. Their bodies will never more be liable to disease, to blight, and decay; for they shall be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. And when risen incorruptible, the soul, once driven from that house, will return to inhabit it forever. And what a change, in comparison with its former home! Then weak and corrupt, now perfected in its entire organization, the soul finds it fitted for the discharge of its high functions. Why should we, then, sorrow for our departed as those who have no hope? Nay, let us rather rejoice that, while we ourselves are hastening to the grave, and all earthly happiness and hopes are on the

wing and doomed to be wrecked, we may plant our hope upon the threshold of that day when every sleeper shall awake, and we, and those whom, in our deep affliction, we laid in the silent grave, shall rise to an immortality full of glory. O! it strips death of its terrors, and the grave of its gloom, when I am assured of God that my humanity shall share in the blessings of a glorious immortality. To know that this body, so often rent by anguish and racked with pain, shall share in the joys of an endless future, reconciles me to the afflictions of life, and makes me long for all those qualifications which will give me a part in the resurrection of the just. For what need I fear from adversity, from fire, or sword, or death, when I know that these hands shall sweep an everlasting harp, these eyes behold the eternal throne and the wonders of Jehovah, and these feet, so wearily threading the path of life, shall stand in the midst of thee, O, Jerusalem! thou city of my God, my everlasting home!

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF THE FAMILY BOND A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION TO THE BEREAVED.

“Not in the grave, not in the grave, my soul
Believe thy friend belov'd;
But in the lonely hour,
And in the evening walk,
Think that he companies thy solitude!”

THERE is a withering power in the stroke of death. It not only shatters “the harp of a thousand strings,” and hushes its melody forever on earth, but the blow which stills the heart of a friend falls with stunning effect upon all who stood in intimate relation with him. A thousand persons feel at the same instant the electric shock, if they form an unbroken chain of contact with the battery; and thus when one is stricken by death, all who are united with him by ties of friendship and affection instantly feel it. But while pain and grief accompany the removal of friends, and all looks desolate within and without, there is this consolation left us, that they are not lost, but gone, like orbs which are carried in their circle beyond the range of our vision, but which still exist and shine, though their light falls not around us. And surely the conviction that their being is not extinguished —

not blotted from God's intelligent universe, but that they have taken their places among the exalted and holy, affords us consolation in our sorrow, and joy in our grief. And it is still more consolatory to know that they are yet ours; that they are united to us by a bond which even death cannot impair. And to my heart there is nothing more cheering and sustaining under the pressures of bereavement than the conviction that the changes which befall the relations of life only extend to the material, and leave the spiritual without weakness or blight. It is a sad reflection, which forces itself upon the mind when contemplating the family circle, that it is destined to be broken up sooner or later. And it is, perhaps, on this account, that we seldom suffer our thoughts to dwell upon such an event, until it is no longer possible to avoid it. And on the part of many there seem to be studied efforts to keep themselves from anticipating that which is borne with such difficulty when it comes to pass. We instinctively turn from that day, which is winging its approach momentarily nearer, when one of us who compose that circle of warm hearts must leave those beloved scenes and friends, and go alone into eternity. We would rather, while looking upon our children, and they upon us, wish that the mildew of affliction and the gloom of desolation might never fall upon our abode of happiness. And it may seem to some an unkind and unwarrantable intrusion to disturb the placid feelings of those who have never yet been willing to entertain the idea that the hour of separation from those whom they love is coming. And if we were under the dark power of

cheerless heathenism, it might be prudent not to think at all on the subject; but since life and immortality have been brought to light in the Gospel, and we are privileged to take a full view of the immense range of our destiny, it is both the dictate of reason and religion to consider every aspect which it may assume, and to ponder every particular which belongs to our history.

Although we may dread the hour of separation, it will lighten the calamity if we are prepared for it. Instead, then, of avoiding all reference in our thoughts and conversations to the severance of those bonds which unite us to each other, it should be the frequent subject of meditation and prayer. Regarding ourselves and those whom God has given us as immortal, and living with reference to our future existence, we may look upon all those changes to which we and our families are subjected in our progress to our final home, without dread. For what is a brief separation compared with an eternal union? And it is after all, only an apparent, and not a real rupture of the family relation. It is a part of our destiny, and, if it be accompanied with pain, we find a compensation for the evil in the hope of that endless and glorious future, where we shall be reunited without the possibility of another separation. And while we are advancing towards the possession of that fadeless glory which they have already inherited, we are conscious of the lively exercises of love with which we cherished them while they were living. Nothing can quench the fires of affection which their presence once kindled in our hearts, and we have no

reason to believe that their glorified spirits cease to cherish us amid the wonders and joys of their blissful home. We can form some idea of the sympathy which exists between friends, part of whom are in heaven and part on earth, from the known operations of our minds when as members of the same family our lots are cast in different localities. Members of the same household, as they attain maturity of years, choose different occupations, and their pursuits may be such as to make it necessary for them to live in different states, or countries, so that the parents of a numerous family may find themselves the second time the sole occupants of their dwelling. The sons and daughters are all gone, but the ties which unite them are not broken. If they lived affectionately and happily through their childhood, then their dispersion and the distance at which they reside from each other, do not enfeeble, but rather strengthen the attachment which exists between them. The same bond which knit together in holy love their youthful hearts, still holds their spirits in sweet communion, though many thousand miles may intervene. This bond of union reaches across deserts, seas, and continents, gathering within its embrace all the members of the same fold. It is a part of our spiritual being, and claims an immortality with the soul. There is no affection which relates to earthly objects that is of equal strength and permanence. The youth who has gone to a distant land in pursuit of gain, carries with him the hearts of those whom he left behind. Is there a day that he is out of the thoughts of his parents? Is he not rather the constant subject of their conversation, their prayers, their

anxieties and their hopes? O! there is a viewless chord that extends from heart to heart, and, like the electric wire which unites two opposite poles, instantly communicates to the one that which transpires in the other. Has the mother given up her daughter to the missionary work in a far-off land, and is her child toiling for the advancement of the gospel amid the "habitations of cruelty?" Although she has cheerfully surrendered her to this glorious service, she has not ceased to love her. Her thoughts are continually with the absent one, and the outflows of her soul towards that beloved child become more and more abundant as the days and years of separation increase. Undying love brings her name frequently to her lips, and her image before her mind. And with equal tenderness do the absent ones cherish the loved ones at home. If they are thrown out upon the circumference of earth, their hearts turn as instinctively to the home of their childhood, as the needle does to the pole.

It is not at their respective localities that they commune with each other, but around the place of their birth; and whenever they revisit in imagination the familiar scenes of other days, those places are always peopled with those who once rejoiced with them in their earlier and happier years.

This kindred feeling is not of sickly growth; its roots extend into the holiest depths of human nature, and are nourished by the purest emanations of the spirit. One of the great laws in the material world, is that of affinity between things of a common origin and of common properties. This

is illustrated and proved through all the kingdoms of nature. But this law controls with like authority and even with greater force in the world of mind, than it does in the world of matter. And thus we see that where there is a similarity of taste and disposition, and an identity of pursuit, there is a commingling of hearts. Great purposes are subserved, and benevolent ends are accomplished by this arrangement of Providence. A strong current of sympathy pulsates through our humanity, so that all those generous emotions and benevolent impulses of which we are capable, leap into embodied forms of relief, when calamities of one kind or another fall upon our brethren of mankind. It is asserted by philosophers, that the fall of a pebble sends its vibrations through the entire framework of the earth. And Melville, in discoursing of the murderer Cain, carries this thought to a still higher elevation, and gives it a more sublime range, when he represents him as pursued and haunted by the outcries of all nature against him for his atrocious crime. "It may be, that fashioned as man is out of the dust of the earth, there are such links between him and the material creation, that when the citadel of his life is rudely invaded, the murderous blow is felt throughout the vast realm of nature; so that, though there be no truth in the wild legend, that if the assassin enter the chamber where the victim is stretched, the gasping wounds will bleed afresh, yet may earth, sea, and air have sympathy with the dead, and form themselves into furies to hunt down his destroyer. It may have been more than a rhetorical expression when God assigned a voice to the

ground that was saturated with human blood. And these may be utterances which are more than the coinings of his own racked conscience to the murderer—utterances which though heard only by himself, because himself alone hath dislocated a chord in the great harmonies of creation, may speak piercingly of the frightful atrocity, and invoke the vengeance of Heaven on the wretch who hath dared to withdraw one note from the universal anthem.” Whether men would or would not subscribe to the sentiment in this eloquent passage from this gifted divine, none can have any reluctance about yielding their acknowledgment to the fact that there is a mysterious sympathetic connection between all who are partakers of human nature. Humanity is a unit. And since all the children of men have a common origin, and are alike in all the essential properties of their being, therefore, if the laws of affinity and sympathy act any where with acknowledged force, it is in the human family. And we have an exemplification of the truthfulness of this, in those reciprocal influences which circulate upon the surface and through all the great channels of that entire body of social beings which covers the earth. When the tidings of distressing sufferings or disastrous calamities which have befallen our brethren of the flesh on the opposite side of the globe reach us, the secret fountains of our nature are stirred to their holiest depths, and we share their misfortunes and sorrows. A fellow feeling makes us conscious that they are a part of us, and that our sympathy for them is eminently natural and rational. When the pestilence is desolating the cities of Persia, or China, or the

plague is wasting the inhabitants of India, it is with painful feelings that we peruse the records of such devastations. It is with instinctive horror that we follow the invisible scourge from city to city and from kingdom to kingdom, while at the same time we participate in all those emotions of dread which cause men to shrink from the presence of the terrible destroyer. We sympathise with suffering, in whatever form and in whatever locality it may be endured by man. A cry of distress once uttered, completes the circuit of the globe. Those yearnings for life and liberty which issue from hearts bleeding and quivering under the iron heel of the oppressor, mournfully echo through all the channels of our being, and pour their vibrations along every chord of our souls. A crushing burden, wherever it presses upon human hearts, is like a mountain cast into the sea, which will raise waves whose undulations will be felt upon the farthest shore.

It is this same law of our being, schooled and elevated by our holy religion, which calls forth from the comforts of home and the endearments of friendship, the man, and the female delicately reared, and constrains them to present themselves to the church, and say, lo! here are we, send us to publish the tidings of salvation to our benighted heathen brethren. And it is in the hope of benefiting the ignorant and degraded pagans, that difficulties are cheerfully encountered, and if these cannot be surmounted, they are meekly endured, yea, even life itself is surrendered by those who labor for the elevation of the race and the glory of God. Behold the servants of Christ scattered over all the earth, in the burning south and the frozen north,

exposed to perils of every imaginable form, toiling on in their arduous work of establishing schools, of instructing the ignorant, and of organizing churches, and thus opening fountains all over this desert world, that "the streams which make glad the city of God," may flow out upon the wide fields of our weary humanity, and water and mature harvests for eternal glory; and search for the motives which carried them out into those distant fields, and which sustain them in their self-denying exertions, and these will abundantly witness that it is the love of Christ and of souls which prompted them to the undertaking, and which supports them in their humane and Christian labors. This bond of union or fellow-feeling which unites the whole race, acts with such force as to create a deep concern in those nations who have been exalted above others through the influences of Christianity, for their more wretched brethren, so that they labor for the elevation and regeneration of the kindreds and tongues who are still sitting "in the region and shadow of death."

But this bond acquires strength, and acts more energetically in proportion as the circle of its operation is diminished. This is strictly philosophical, because in harmony with the laws of our being. It is the same power acting within a narrower compass; and hence we have sentiments and feelings of nationality. We cherish a deeper interest for the citizens of this Republic than we do for those of other nations. And when travelling in a distant land we are thrown into the company of an American, our hearts warm towards him more than towards those of any other nation.

And under such circumstances we are still more strongly attracted to him when we make the discovery that he is from the same State, and yet more when he is from the same city or neighborhood. Such a knowledge at once establishes confidence between us, and we feel and converse as though we had always known each other. And yet the family bond rises superior to this in strength, in tenderness, and in durability. It is the force and depth of a law wide and deep as humanity, operating within that circle of hearts which are the offspring of the same beloved parents. My brothers and sisters, father and mother, wife and children, are "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." I cannot think or speak of them without feeling that we are "one and inseparable." That those ties which link our hearts, and those chords which bind our souls in union, are never to be broken. Why, if not in obedience to this law, does the child, whose father is an inebriate, or the victim of some other debasing vice, still love him who is shunned by society? Why does the mother love that son who has broken through every restraint, and outraged all the sensibilities of her heart, and cherish him after he has become a by-word and hissing in the world? O! it is because it is her child. The inspired writers, and our Lord Jesus, have chosen the family bond, when they would illustrate the depth and strength of that love which our Heavenly Father bears to all his creatures. When God wished to assure desponding Israel of His tender care and protection, He put this language into the mouth of the prophet, "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and

my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." There could not be a more forcible image of His tenderness and His undying compassion for His people, than the one which is drawn from the ardent feelings which a faithful mother cherishes for her child. And thus, also, has our Saviour represented the love of God in the father of the prodigal. Although that wayward and profligate youth had dishonored the family, and forfeited every claim to parental regard, yet did he retain a place in the father's heart; and when at last he did return a wreck of what he had been, and covered with every mark of a deep degradation, the yearnings and impulses of a parent's heart caused him to forget the feebleness of age and the guilt of his son, and he ran to meet him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and welcomed him with a baptism of tears. And there are, doubtless, many parents whose children have broken loose from the restraints of their authority, and have gone out into the world and grown worthless, who would bestow a similar welcome upon those erring ones if they would but return to the bosom of those deserted homes. This bond of union stands second only to that which unites the soul to God by a living faith; only that is higher and holier, and will triumph over natural affection.

As an interesting and instructive illustration of the comparative strength of natural and spiritual affection, I will sub-

mit a brief statement of the trial of a young friend. Some time ago a young man of fine abilities and a good education, and a member of one of the Jesuit orders in one of our large cities, was awakened by the spirit of God, and made to see the errors which abounded in the Roman Catholic Church; and, after mature reflection, he terminated his connection with it. A few months after this occurred, he made application for membership to the church of which I was pastor; and after a careful examination of the motives which influenced him to renounce Romanism, the reasons for the hope that he cherished, and a suitable term of probation, he was duly admitted. Some time after his admission into church fellowship, he wrote home, informing his brother, who is a priest, of the change in his ecclesiastical relations, and the motives which induced the change. In answer to these tidings, he received a letter from his former bishop, and also one from his aged mother, written by his sister. The bishop strongly appealed to his natural affections, and said "he had seen too deeply into his heart not to feel assured that his beloved son would retrieve this fatal step, and expressed the hope of his speedy return to the bosom of the Holy Mother." But his mother seemed to be deeply affected, and her very soul was stirred by the news of her son's conversion to Protestantism. She threw all the tenderness and yearnings of her maternal nature into her letter, in which she besought him to retrace his steps. "Were I not enfeebled by age," said she, "I would cross seas and continents to gain your presence, and, like the mother of Augustine, I would throw

myself at your feet, and would not stir until you would return to the faith. O, my son, my son! my fallen son!" After telling him that prayers were offered in all the churches of the parish for his recovery to the Church, his sister informs him that his portrait, which hung in the parlor, and which was fondly looked upon from day to day, had been removed out of sight, and a picture of the Virgin Mary put in its place. It was a sore trial, for he fondly loved that aged mother, that brother and sister, and it was literally giving them up; but, blessed be God, he loved his Saviour more than these, and he stood unshaken amid those mighty appeals which fell upon his heart with unusual power. This shows the superiority of spiritual over natural affection. But, although he was willing for Christ's sake to have himself cut off and cast out of the hearts of his kindred, and they were ready, in obedience to the dictates of a superstitious system, to put out of sight the very image of the absent one that glowed so harmlessly on the canvass, all this could not destroy that family bond which made them one. For while ostensibly there is a gulf between them so wide and deep that neither could venture to cross it, that bond of union which made them members of the same family reaches across that gulf; and do what they may, they cannot annihilate that affection which they bear to each other.

And this is surely not an isolated case; for there are innumerable instances where such barriers interpose, that all personal intercourse is broken off between those of the same household; but though they should even desire to extinguish

their love for those who are joined to them by ties of consanguinity, they shall not be able to do it. It is a law of their nature, and they must yield submission to its dictates. There is a father whose wishes have been thwarted concerning a beloved, perhaps idolized, child, whose disobedience to parental authority has banished her from his home and presence; but although there may be a coolness and determinateness of aspect on his brow, and an inflexible sternness may mantle his features, which would exclude the disobedient one from his house, yet, notwithstanding that forbidding exterior, that daughter has a home in his heart; and in secret he deplores her in all the bitterness of his soul. A kind Providence has, therefore, made a glorious provision, and placed it in our spiritual constitution with which to arm us against those calamities and changes which are incident to our earthly pilgrimage. We are united to those we love by eternal bonds. They may pass away from the earth, and we may commit their bodies to the tomb; but this bond reaches beyond the sepulchre, and holds them in sweet embrace. Such a view is certainly not opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, and is in strict conformity with the laws of our being, and the testimony of our inward consciousness. We are just as cognizant of the fact that we love our sainted friends, as we are that we affectionately cherish our fellow-pilgrims on earth. There is not a day that we do not hold communion with them, and they with us. For it is our privilege to believe that our departed are interested in our welfare, and perhaps permitted to attend us, and to minister

to us in our upward progress to eternal life. While they are elevated in their views and feelings above the possibility of experiencing pain (supposing them to be cognizant of our infirmities and imperfections), they may be round and about us, and render important service in the work of our salvation. But whatever the offices may be with which they are charged, we rejoice in the assurances of our hearts that the flow of affection between us and them continues in a current that is ever deepening and widening as we are progressing towards our eternal home. The indestructibility of this bond of family union is a gracious and exhaustless source of consolation to the children of God, and a conviction to which the soul clings with all its immortal energies. This thought is beautifully expanded in some stanzas by Wordsworth, in a dialogue with a little girl whom he interrogates as to the number of their family

“Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
 How many may you be?”
 “How many? seven in all,” she said,
 And wondering looked at me.
 “And where are they, I pray you tell?”
 She answered, “Seven are we,
 And two of us at Conway dwell,
 And two are gone to sea.
 Two of us in the churchyard lie —
 My sister and my brother;
 And in the churchyard cottage, I
 Dwell near them with my mother.”
 “But they are dead; those two are dead!
 Their spirits are in heaven!”
 ’Twas throwing words away: for still
 The little Maid would have her will,
 And said, “Nay, we are seven.”

No poet, ay, no philosopher could have changed her mind, for none could reason out of existence this family bond. They were seven; two were at sea, two at Conway, two were slumbering in the grave, and she was living with her mother—like the billows of the deep, which are distinct and many, yet form but one ocean.

It is a blessed thought that we shall still love in heaven, and experience joy in the society of dear departed ones. How cheering the knowledge, while toiling through the world as strangers and pilgrims, that the bond of affection which unites us to hearts throbbing with the same high impulses, and animated with the same immortal hopes which thrill within us, is to last forever! And if we have beloved parents, brothers, sisters, companions, or children amid the glorious realities of that immortal state where one instant is worth all the concentrated delights of earth, we are linked by the strongest and tenderest ties to those amazing blessings which are at the right hand of God. Christianity throws a grandeur around the prospects of the believer, so dazzling that an angel might sink in silent wonder and admiration before it. And what motives do these considerations furnish to rear our children for heaven! If we attune infant lips to praise, those notes of thanksgiving will vibrate forever. If the moulding hand of the Redeemer is drawn upon them, and the Holy Spirit teaches their hearts to make melody to the Lord, those melodies will be heard when the music of the spheres shall be silent. And O! what rapture will spread through the

entire circle, when all the members of our family shall have reached those blissful shores! Who can imagine what we shall feel, when it can be said we are all in heaven! When the last wanderer has come in with songs of deliverance, and the shout rings through the armies of the redeemed—all home, home from the distant land—forever home! Let us rejoice in this union of hearts. Let us bless God for making the family bond durable as the soul. O! my sainted mother! my beloved sister! my beautiful angel boy, I will not deplore you as lost; for ye are still ours, we are yet one, and shall forever be, for that bond which unites us shall exist in all its vigor when the wheels of the universe stand still! When every mountain shall have fallen, it shall stand unimpaired; when every law whose authority is acknowledged by material nature shall have been annulled, this law which makes us one, shall be in force. When every river has run dry, and the sea is without a drop, this family bond shall roll through the immense channels of our immortal being, streams of glory. This assurance of the indestructibility of the family bond, fills even the grief-stricken with ecstasy, and sheds gleams of eternal sunshine upon the life, dark with afflictive bereavements. And is there not a depth of consolation in this, which should reanimate with joy those desolate souls which are wasting away in sighs of grief! Come to the cross, ye mourning and afflicted ones; gather around the bleeding sacrifice of Calvary; steep those hearts in atoning blood, until, washed and purified, they become the habitation of the

Holy Ghost, and he will give birth to such hopes as will shed a sweet peace over your wounded and weary spirits, while they will raise you into communion with the saints on high. And if we are exalted into fellowship with the Father and the Son, we shall finally ascend to the presence of God, "where there is fulness of joy, and to his right hand where there are pleasures forevermore."

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

AT THE SEPULCHRES OF OUR DEPARTED WE MAY ALSO LEARN THE RIGHT WHICH GOD HOLDS IN US AND OUR FAMILIES.

“No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”

IN the death of those we love, God declares His sovereign right to us, and to ours. He alone has power to give life, and power to take it away. “We are the Lord’s.” And it is at the graves of departed ones that we realize the fact, that it is the Divine prerogative, to do with us and our families as the wisdom of His counsel may suggest best suited to promote His glory, and to advance our happiness. And if our minds are properly instructed in relation to the right which He holds in all His creatures, and our hearts are schooled to acquiesce in all the dispensations of His Providence, we will be able to say in seasons of bereavement — “It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.” “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.” In the language of the Apostle which I

have placed at the head of this chapter, there are two important truths asserted. No man liveth to himself. Man is a part of a great system, a link in that chain which binds him in sympathy with all things. He is so connected with the great universe of mind, that he cannot so isolate himself as to act alone, or have the results of his actions terminate upon himself. It is utterly impossible for him not to affect others by his life and death. He will contribute his influence for evil or for good, to the community which is the sphere of his exertions. But upon this truth I will not dwell, and therefore, at once pass to the consideration of the other, viz: "that we are the Lord's." We belong to God. "All souls are mine, saith the Lord, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." As the fashioner of our bodies and the framer of our spirits, He has the same sovereign right in us and our families, as He has in any of His other creations. As the Creator of the universe, it is perfectly just that "He has established His throne in the heavens, and that His kingdom ruleth over all." We question not his right to every system and planet, to every star which flames in the firmament above, to this earth with all its furniture, to every creature, rational or irrational, for He is the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible. The Psalmist says, "the sea is His, for He made it." And the Lord himself says, "every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine—the world also and the fulness thereof." If we grant, therefore,

that He has an indisputable right to every creature, from the tall archangel to the worm which crawls in the dust; if the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; if all the gems and the buried wealth of the earth, as well as the gold and silver, are His, then upon the same ground may His right be asserted to every human being. We are the Lord's by the right of creation. He is the centre from which proceeded that creative energy which peopled immensity with its glowing orbs, with its suns and systems. From the same source issued the wisdom and power which formed man, and which uphold him, for God is the fountain of his blessing, the spring of his joy, and the centre of his glory.

There is no better, or higher right known or recognized in the universe, than that which God has in us. All nations, civilized and barbarous, Christian and pagan, concede the right of property to him who is the originator or producer of a thing. And the law of the land throws its shield of protection over the productions of man's physical or intellectual energies. The creations of genius, as well as the fruits of humble toil, are secured to their proper owners. If an individual invents some nicely contrived machinery, by which labor is lessened in the production of some article of commerce, and it thus becomes a source of gain, he is protected in his right, and in whatever of distinction or profit it may confer upon him. The sculptor sits down to a block of marble, and by patient toil, directed by the force of a high genius, elaborates a human form clothed with grace and beauty, and fitted to adorn the cabinet: and he not only

claims, but all men cheerfully accord to him the right of property in it. And if he had the power to clothe that statue with muscles of flesh, and place within it a throbbing heart and heaving lungs; and if he could endow it with intellectual and moral faculties, and make it a thing of life, of motion, and of thought, it would be no less his. And this is precisely what God has done for every human being. He has bestowed upon us the powers of sensibility and of thought. "We are fearfully and wonderfully made," "and the breath of the Almighty hath given us understanding." And having made us, has He not a right in us, far more just and absolute, than the artist has in the production of his genius? And may not He, without the slightest infringement upon the laws of justice or propriety, dispose of us in any way that his pleasure may dictate or his glory demand? And the argument loses none of its force, when it is applied to any thing which we possess, whether it be property, or friends, or children; for all are the gift of Almighty God. These are treasures loaned to us by the Lord, and may be demanded by Him at any time. And if He has need of the services of our friends or children elsewhere, and removes them, not reluctantly, but cheerfully should they be surrendered. When He would place another gem in the Redeemer's diadem, add another note to the lofty anthem of redeeming love, or needs another ministering spirit in the execution of the work of redemption, it should be a matter of gratulation, if we are privileged to furnish God one from our fold, for the accomplishment of such an end. We should early learn this

lesson, and always cherish a realizing sense of His right in us and our families. And do we not offer our infants to the Lord in Holy Baptism, and thus solemnly consecrate them to His service, and by this means virtually acknowledge His right to claim them whenever it seemeth Him good to transfer them from earth to heaven? We should, therefore, resign them to His arms without a murmur.

We find a very interesting illustration on this point, in the history of a Swiss lady, and the wife of an honorable and distinguished nobleman. Having been carefully educated in the great principles of Christianity, she was known as a woman of eminent piety, who had correct views of God's right to all that He had placed in her possession. Her marriage was blest with two little boys; and these being the only children, both parents ardently cherished them. They were spared to them, until they had arrived at that interesting age when the body glows with its highest charms, and the mental and moral faculties unfold in such a manner as to make youth exceedingly lovely. Gentle, amiable, and intelligent, they were truly the jewels of their fond parents. Some important business about this time called the father away from his home, and during his absence they took ill and died, a short time before he had returned. He had known nothing of their illness or death; and his excellent wife, feeling the importance of gently breaking the painful intelligence, as soon as she had welcomed him home, thus addressed him: "My husband, I have something to tell you, which I did during your absence, and must know at once,

whether it meets your approbation. While you were away, a friend of mine who some years ago loaned me a number of jewels, came here and said that he needed them, and therefore found it necessary to demand them. I told him that as my husband as well as myself greatly valued them, I would prefer, if he could wait until your return, and I would then restore them; but this he declined, and kindly but firmly claimed them; and so I surrendered them to the owner. Did I do right, my lord?" The husband replied, "How can my good wife ask me such a question? surely it was right." "Come then," she said, "this way;" and leading him to the couch where she had laid her loved ones, she lifted the white sheet from her lovely boys who were sleeping in death, and said, "These are my jewels. God gave them; God claimed them while you were away, and I gave them up," and she fell upon his bosom and wept. The intelligence was well broken, for, as soon as the stricken father could command utterance, he said, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

But we are the Lord's not only because we are the creatures of His power, but also because to this right of creation He adds that of preservation. He who stretched out the heavens, and formed the earth, and created man upon it, is also the gracious Preserver of all things. The creating and sustaining power reside in the same Being. The preserving mercy or providence of God extends over all the universe; it is felt in the world farthest from His throne, and in the least as in the greatest of objects. Systems, suns,

and stars, are fed by His light, and clothed with glory by His hand ; and all are moved by the impulse of the Almighty's will. And thus, also, does His merciful providence extend over us, and hold us in being. We are as dependent upon God for life and its varied blessings, as the infant is upon the bosom of its mother from which it draws its nourishment. The Apostle expresses this idea very forcibly when he says, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." Independently of His preserving mercy, there is no life and no blessing. Pluck up a tree or a plant by its roots, and thus destroy its connection with the earth, and it will quickly die. And thus if God's providential care should be withdrawn from us, we would cease to exist. We hold the same relation to His sustaining power as the members do to the body ; and just as this arm, if severed from its source of life, would fall to the earth and rot, thus, also, would we instantly perish were we cut off from the vital source of all things. If He is, therefore, the author of our being and the preserver of our lives, we are unquestionably His property. And if in His wisdom He removes us, or any that we cherish, He is only enforcing that right to us which we have already acknowledged, and must daily acknowledge. And not only does God claim us because He has brought us into being, and preserves us from day to day, but He is continually occupied in doing us good. We breathe His air, enjoy His sunshine, drink refreshing draughts from His fountains, and are nourished by the fruits which His providence produces. There is no blessing of which He is not the

author; for "every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." If in this world a human being could be divorced from all the favors of Providence, what would there be left?

And while it is of His infinite and spontaneous mercy that we are upheld and nourished, He gives us all needful blessings in rich abundance. His smiles fell upon our helpless infancy, and the light of His countenance illumines our path through life. And while we are under solemn obligations to love and to serve Him, and to place ourselves and all we have at His disposal, in view of the manifold favors which we have received from His hands, He has also been to us a covert from the storm, and a shield in the day of peril. He has guarded us from dangers seen and unseen. When visible calamities threatened to overwhelm us, He reached over us His protecting arm. And the records of eternity will only reveal the countless, unseen dangers from which the hand of Jehovah delivered us along the journey of life. It will then be made manifest how "He gave His angels charge concerning us;" how they encamped about us by night, and watched over us by day; for "white-winged angels meet the child on the vestibule of life," attend it through its pilgrimage, and hover around the coffin of old age, and never relinquish their ministering office until they have borne the spirit to the bosom of God. And it is this sleepless anxiety, this fatherly solicitude which the great God every moment exercises over us, that gives Him an undoubted

right to us who are the objects of His care, and the recipients of His mercies.

But there is another right recognized among men as just which God holds in us, and that is, the right acquired by possession. "By the law of nations the first discoverer of a country is regarded as entitled to its possession; and the inventor of an art hath a right of exercising it." And if it be deemed just (and mankind are agreed as to this,) for a nation to claim the ownership in a continent or an island by virtue of its discovery and possession, though they could have had no agency in the formation of its soil, or the creation of its wealth, how much more may God claim us as His rightful property, when He has made us, and possessed us from our infancy! It was under His fostering care that our minds were taught to think, and our hearts to feel. He held us within the embraces of His love and the circle of His protection; and in the light of His favor and under the gracious influences which He breathed upon us, our souls have grown to their present expansion. Those objects in the external world which excited our minds to intellectual efforts, and which warmed our affections into life, were placed there by His hand. Those glowing heavens which kindled admiration in our souls, which gave wing to our thoughts and grasp to our imaginations; those varied landscapes, and bold mountains, magnificent rivers, and capacious seas, whose beauty and grandeur charmed our eyes, invigorated and expanded our intellects, were all fashioned and adorned by infinite power. "Lift up

your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth." And while all those objects in nature which have contributed to the development of our intellectual faculties, were created by the Lord; thus, also, must that moral excellence which any of us possess, be ascribed to those divinely ordained instrumentalities and influences which have come from Him. No human agency, apart from the divine blessing, can refine, elevate, and sanctify our spiritual being. All good desires, and all virtuous actions, must be regarded as the products of the Holy Spirit. So that, in whatever light we may regard ourselves, we are emphatically the Lord's. "He has fearfully and wonderfully made us;"—taught our bodies to move, our minds to think, and our hearts to love; and therefore, in view of these considerations, He has a perfect right to us, and to dispose of us, paramount to that of the potter over his vessel.

But we are the Lord's by purchase or redemption. Man, by his voluntary disobedience, fell under the displeasure of God. He forfeited every claim to the Divine favor, and became the victim of a painful vassalage, and the slave of sin. "He was sold under the law," and no created power could redeem him from the curse which he had brought upon himself. Doomed to everlasting wo, God might have left him in this lamentable condition without bringing any reflection upon His government. He might have permitted this

whole rebellious race to lie forever under the weight of a deep damnation, and His throne would have remained spotless. But His mercy restrained justice, and so eloquently pleaded the cause of the fallen, that the adorable Son of God compassionated our condition, and covenanted with the Father to assume our debt, and to suffer in our stead, the penalty of the violated law. It was the law of a great God, and a great empire, which had been broken, and it demanded a sacrifice for atonement, corresponding in dignity with the divine statute. None but the Supreme law-giver could furnish an expedient, and hence Jesus Christ alone could redeem us. By a union of His divine nature with the human, He could make an adequate atonement, for His sufferings would be as infinite in their merit, as were his perfections in dignity; and thus He constitutes the link in that chain which binds us in reconciliation with God. "For we are redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was slain as a lamb without spot and without blemish." "He was wounded for our transgressions, and with his stripes we are healed." "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And it was in virtue of His atoning sacrifice that the whole race became his property. To Him, are promised, "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." In view of His humiliation and death, "the Father also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every other name. That at the name of Jesus," as the great mediatorial king, "every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in

earth, and things under the earth ; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." It is not necessary to enlarge upon this point in order to prove that we are Christ's, and that He has a sovereign right in those whom He has redeemed ; suffice it to say, that the law of the universe recognized us as slaves to a perpetual bondage, and by the authority of that law, Jesus Christ has obtained an eternal right to the whole human family. Among the ancient Romans there was a statute called "the redemption law," which allowed citizens to purchase captives taken in war, and subject them to involuntary servitude for life, or free them at their pleasure. But when persons of this class were emancipated by their masters, it was considered that gratitude and friendship should cause the captives to remain in the service of him who befriended them, by first redeeming them, and then giving them their freedom. And should not our love for our compassionate Redeemer, act with such force as to make us His willing servants, and induce us to place ourselves and our all at His disposal ? For, has He not redeemed us from a worse slavery, and possessed us of a more glorious liberty ? A few years ago, a wealthy gentleman of New Orleans manumitted two slaves, who had faithfully served him, and legally secured ample provision for their support, and shortly afterwards died. And now, these colored men, thus befriended, out of gratitude to their benefactor, spend several hours each day in scouring the marble of his tomb, and in decorating with fresh flowers, the place of his repose. Whatever we may think of the manner in which they show

their gratitude to their former master, we must admit that they exhibit a commendable appreciation of his goodness. And if we appreciate the kindness of our Divine Master, and properly value the benefactions with which he has crowned us, should we not be willing to give to our exalted Redeemer, a few of the flowers which adorn the garden of our home, wherewith He may decorate His throne in heaven? Yes! we, our children, and friends, are all Thine, blessed Saviour, for Thou hast purchased us with Thy anguish and blood; and we will not withhold from Thee, those whom Thou wilt make partakers of Thy glory.

Such a recognition of the Divine right to us and our families carries with it many blessed advantages. It will exert a good influence upon us while we are occupied in their education, and in making provision for their support. It will incline us to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so that, when they are removed from earth, they may be fitted for heaven. With just conceptions of the relation which they and we sustain to God, our influence over them, and our training of them, will all be regulated in such a manner as to secure for us all the Divine approbation. It will, also, induce us to bestow a higher care and culture upon their souls than upon their bodies. Regarding them as youthful immortals, we will strive to invest them with those spiritual adornments which will fit them to shine not so much upon the theatre of this world as in the kingdom of their Father above. And we will be much more concerned to make them heirs of the riches of eternal glory,

than to make them the inheritors of those treasures which are transient and perishable. For a title to the mansions of God and to the fields of light, written by the Spirit upon their hearts, will, in our estimation, far exceed in value the parchment that would make them heirs of earthly kingdoms. And when there are unremitted efforts put forth on our part to bring them to a knowledge of Him, whom to know aright is life eternal, we can scarcely fail of success, since God is striving with us for the accomplishment of the same end.

This acknowledgment of the Divine right in us and to our families will also exert an important and determining power in regard to the pursuits in which we might wish our children to engage. We will not withhold them from any work or position which the providence of God clearly marks out for them. We will not object, but rejoice, if they choose even the most self-denying and arduous callings, if by so doing they glorify God, and secure the salvation of their souls. And while it will reconcile us to any sacrifice of feeling or comfort which we may endure when God calls a child to labor in some distant field, it also compensates us by the delightful assurance that the energies of its being are devoted to their appropriate use. But a recognition of this right will also exert a good influence upon our attachments. These will be formed with reference to, and in subordination of, the Divine right in the objects we love. We will cherish each other as immortal beings, so that when death parts us we acquiesce in the dispensation enforcing the right which

God holds in our friends. And thus, in every bereavement will we see the finger of the Lord, and find consolation for our grief-stricken hearts. This doctrine carries a sweet savor into all the relations of life, and clothes all things with an unearthly charm. In its light I look upon myself and my family as the property of God; and I must not, therefore, put my faculties, my time, and talents, to any other use than that which He has designated. The sphere which He has appointed is the only appropriate sphere for my exertions. The work which He has commanded I must cheerfully perform. And so far as my influence can control the lives and actions of others, it must be exerted to bring them into conformity with the Divine will. In what an interesting light will all things be contemplated, if we cherish sentiments which recognize God as the owner and ruler of them. And with such views, how easy it is to consecrate our mental and moral faculties, our property, and our children, to the service and glory of Him whose we are! O! it stamps an immortal worth upon our bodies and souls, and throws an inconceivable grandeur around the destiny of human beings. And where there is a hearty acknowledgment of this right, and a full surrender of ourselves to Him who claims us, we pass from a state of sin to a state of holiness; and from the bondage of corruption and the gloomy prospect of eternal wrath to the heirship of unclouded and everlasting glory. For when we believe that we are His by creation, preservation, and redemption, and receive Jesus Christ in all His

fulness and all His offices, we enter into the possession of all things. All things are your's, says the Apostle. And to what an exalted position are Christians then elevated! We have an interest in, and a right to, all the universe, for we are heirs with Christ — heirs of all the worlds which people immensity, of all the blessings and resources of universal dominion, and of all the glories which may be evolved through the tremendous cycles of endless duration out of the unfathomable bosom of eternity and the infinite nature of Jehovah. And with such a hope, death itself becomes one of our greatest earthly blessings, forasmuch as it ushers us into this boundless circle of high and perpetual glory. And while we find in this assurance every thing to sustain us, it also reconciles us to the departure of those we love. For to whatever comfort, happiness, honor, and renown they might have been exalted on earth, all honorable distinctions here are but as a drop to the ocean, when compared with their portion in eternity. Let us, then, devoutly acknowledge God's right in us and our families; and by earnest prayer and lively faith draw upon our homes those gracious influences from above, which will beautify our souls with salvation, and qualify us for an abundant entrance into the "rest which remaineth to the people of God." Lord Jesus, do Thou help us to recognize in Thy blood-stained cross the infinite price which Thou hast paid for our redemption, and draw us with the sweet influences of Thy grace, and mould us into Thine own image; for

“Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Christ;
From thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honor, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that smoothes the life of man;
His high endeavours, and his glad success;
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve!
But O! thou bounteous giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown;
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.”

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

FUTURE RECOGNITION

“I felt that however long to me
The slumber of the grave might be ;
I should know him again, 'mid the countless throng,
Who shall bear a part in the Seraphim's song.”

SHALL we know our friends in heaven? This question has been either silently or audibly uttered by all thoughtful minds, while lingering around the remains of their departed. Such an intense interest hangs around this subject, that it may be safely presumed, no one can be altogether indifferent to the answer which may be given to the question. And while nothing more than detached or incidental remarks from others have fallen under my notice; and to my knowledge, no elaborate discussion to disprove this universally received doctrine has ever been attempted, it is somewhat remarkable that the interrogatory should be so frequently and anxiously addressed to us by those bereaved ones, to whom we administer the consolations of the gospel. But is not this fact in itself the most conclusive proof of the intensity of feeling with which the subject is pondered in

their own hearts? Even those who have no doubts as to its truthfulness, feel as though they must be reassured and established in the belief, that they shall know those in heaven whom they loved on earth. And in a matter so vitally connected with our peace, and which is so eminently fitted to beget within us a holy resignation to the Divine dispensations, and inspire us with the most delightful anticipations, it is certainly proper to gather all the light and argument which it is possible to furnish on this subject. And more particularly, because, while it animates the Christian in his upward journey, and arms him with fortitude under trials, it presents a powerful inducement to the neglecters of religion, to renounce their sins, and to seek that moral preparation which is absolutely essential to bring them into blessed reunion with sainted friends. But to feel the truth of a subject, and to unfold it intelligently, and to establish it logically, are very different things. All persons know the refreshing qualities of water, and yet many cannot describe its constituent parts. All know the importance of light, in those revelations of the world around us which it makes to our vision; and yet while all may know the effects it produces, many may be unacquainted with its properties and its laws. And thus it is in relation to some moral subjects, which are more particularly matters of faith; they may be felt with all the certainty of a demonstration, and yet lie beyond the range of our discernment and proof. All things which pertain to the invisible world, are shrouded in mystery and obscurity, if the light of revelation has not fallen upon them and discovered them to

our apprehension. And while the scriptures do not speak so clearly and distinctly on this subject, as upon many others, they give us intimations in relation to it, which cannot well be misunderstood, and open to us a large field where we may gather inferential proof of a strong and decided character. These we shall bring forward in their appropriate place. The first reason which we would assign for our belief in this doctrine, is, that according to our apprehensions of the blessedness of the saints in heaven, the recognition of those with whom we were intimately associated, and whom we loved on earth, forms an important element of future happiness. I am aware, that persons in speaking of the felicity of the righteous, have sometimes expressed themselves in a manner which might induce the belief, that their souls are so filled with the Divine glory, that God forms the only object of their enjoyment, admiration, and rapture. And while we readily concede that the manifestations of the adorable Trinity, form the prominent and chief source of the glory of the redeemed ; we cannot suppose that there will be such an absorption in God, that all other objects fitted to contribute to their felicity will be set aside, or annihilated. On the contrary, we are permitted to believe that other things, apart from God, will be contemplated and enjoyed with satisfaction. The blessings and mysteries of redemption constitute a theme to which sainted as well as angelic minds will forever turn with increasing wonder ; but our conceptions of heaven make it necessary that other things should become tributary to their happiness. From the structure of the mind, as well as from

our experience in regard to our intellectual and moral operations, variety in the objects contemplated, and in the exercises engaged in, are necessary to happiness. And we cannot allow that such a constitutional change in our intellectual structure will take place, that the present laws and tendencies of the mind will all be inoperative in the world to come. It is conceded and expected, that the amazing works of infinite power—the universe with its gorgeous furniture—its systems and worlds, as viewed with the rapid glance of the mind with its enlarged capacities, will be productive of ineffable delight. And if the visible glories with which Deity has garnished the residence of his saints, are designed to increase their pleasure, and to heighten their rapture; have we not still stronger ground to believe that the friendships and associations of earth, which are so intimately interwoven with our thoughts and feelings, and which enter into the very texture and frame-work of our nature, will be allowed to subserve a yet higher office in the promotion of our happiness in the celestial home.

That this supposition is not visionary, but rational; appears from the fact, that human beings are eminently social; and next to communion with God, there is no other source from which we derive so much elevated enjoyment, as from the society of kindred minds. And the more intimately we are united with each other, the richer and holier is the pleasure which we experience. And instead of being sinful, this bond of union when sanctified, becomes an element of religion. The love which we bear to each other, is the basis of all

social happiness! Supreme love to God is the first and greatest duty of man, and the legitimate offspring of this supreme affection for the Lord, is love to our fellow-creatures. We are required to love our neighbor as ourselves. And if that love which we cherish for each other, and which forms a part of our nature, is sanctified and elevated into vital union with that love which we have for God, it is manifest that the one cannot perish any more than the other. It forms a part of the Christian's being, just as certainly, as love to the Supreme Being forms the bond of union between God and his saints. And passing into eternity with this imperishable principle of love for each other, could we be happy without knowing those whom we do love? Or rather, could we love those whom we do not know? Is not a knowledge of the character of God, anterior to the existence of the love which we cherish for Him? Can we love anything without an acquaintance with its properties or appearance? We admire the landscape only after we have looked out upon the beautiful objects with which it is diversified; or when its character has been brought to our perceptions through some other agency than the eye. And upon this same basis do we place our argument, for the truth of the doctrine under discussion. There could be no love for each other in heaven, if there be no recognition of friends there. But as we are assured by the oracles of truth, that love is the great law of heaven and the fountain from which the chief blessings of the redeemed flow; we deem the argument conclusive, that we shall know each other in our future home. It can be readily seen, that

without the admission of this doctrine we are driven to the only alternative ; the belief that our nature will be essentially different then, from what it is now. But what ground have we to warrant such a conclusion ? For while the Scriptures teach us that we shall carry nothing sinful into the habitation of the blest, “for nothing that defileth can enter there,” they leave us to infer, that our humanity with its sanctified affections and all its essential properties, shall ascend into the presence of Jehovah.

We might also contend for the truth of this doctrine on the ground that it is not opposed to reason. It may, indeed, be affirmed with truth, that unaided reason could not, from its deductions, positively assure us that we shall know each other in the future world ; but then the doctrine does not conflict with any of its conclusions. On the contrary, it is reasonable to infer, from the known character of God and His dealings with His creatures, that He will deprive them of nothing which is conducive to their happiness, and not hurtful to their souls. And it is not possible that those who hope for heaven should be indifferent about this matter, or feel otherwise than that to know those we cherish in this life would be a source of inconceivable bliss. With what emotions do we look forward to those interviews which we expect to have with our departed when we reach our long-sought rest ! Behold that mother lingering about those little graves ; does not her soul glow and swell with a holy rapture as she looks forward to the period when she shall be ushered into the sanctities of heaven, and recognize and embrace

those to whom she gave existence? And would it not be a painful reflection were the conviction forced upon the mind of the child, who lost a beloved parent at a period too early in its history to have any recollection of form or feature, that it could never know that parent in heaven? Is it not much more in conformity with the dictates of reason, and in harmony with our feelings, to believe that we shall know our sainted friends amid the multitude of glorified spirits?

Another consideration worthy of notice is, that the inspired writers represent heaven under such emblems as to render the inference of future recognition perfectly legitimate. It is called a kingdom and a commonwealth; and the inhabitants are spoken of as citizens. "Now are ye no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints." As subjects of the same government, and participating in all the immunities and honors of a state, it would seem strange that they should not know each other. Heaven is, moreover, represented under the emblem of a family. God, the father, is at the head of this family. Speaking of those who have entered into reconciliation with heaven, the Apostle says: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." And as this family is composed of all the sanctified in heaven and on earth, we could not reject the doctrine

of recognition without doing violence to all conceptions of, and associations with, the family relation. Members of the same family must surely know each other.

Another proof of this doctrine may be drawn from the general sentiments of mankind. So far as it is possible to ascertain the views of the ancients on this subject, they all harmonize on this point. It is universally admitted to be true by all those writers who have recorded their opinions. Grecian and Roman poets, who described the invisible or spirit world, uniformly represent their heroes and other characters as recognizing each other when they met. And Milton and Shakspeare give utterance to similar sentiments. It is, therefore, just to infer that a doctrine which is so generally received must be true. And it is only upon the best established evidence to the contrary that we should be willing to reject a sentiment, the truthfulness of which has been held by so many different nations for thousands of years. For it is not probable that a merciful God would allow so many generations, differing so widely on many other subjects, and yet agreeing on this, to be in error for so long a period. And could we now gather the views of the thoughtful and intelligent men of the present generation, they would, doubtless, be in harmony with the belief of the ancients. The most eminent theologians, in the different periods of the church's history, have left us their testimony in favor of future recognition. These opinions might easily be advanced here; but as there is so little, if any, difference in the manner in which they have expressed themselves, it may be

sufficient to state that Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and so far as we know, all the Reformers fully believed that we shall know each other in heaven.

But it is possible to plant this doctrine upon a still firmer basis, by a direct appeal to Scripture. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we have the sanction of the Lord Jesus to this doctrine. That thrilling history, or parable, was drawn by one to whom all things were known, and who never spoke at random. The spiritual world with all its mysteries was laid open to Him, and He was cognizant of every thing which transpired in the invisible state, so that He could speak with accuracy on any subject which He might wish to unfold to the minds of his hearers. We are distinctly told that there was a recognition of Abraham and Lazarus on the part of the rich man. "He lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." In whatever light we regard that portion of scripture, it manifestly carries with it the Divine sanction of this doctrine. And not only did he know Lazarus, who once lay neglected at his gate, but he begs that one of the dead might be sent to warn his five brethren, that they might not come to the same place of torment; and if the departed did not know each other, why should he have dreaded the presence of his brethren, who might reproach him for his impiety and his influence upon them, for it cannot be supposed that in hell there is any natural affection. And if it was possible for the rich man to know Lazarus and Abraham, must it not be so with all. The Saviour, when he speaks to

the Jews of the consequences of their rejection of Him as their Messiah, says, "Ye shall see Abraham and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves shut out." There are also certain statements in the gospel of John, which look to this subject. In those last few chapters, which Ols-hausen calls the Holy of Holies, in the gospel history, we find the Redeemer unfolding the deeper mysteries of religion, and lifting the veil which hides the invisible world, so as to afford believers glimpses of their exalted and glorified state. He speaks particularly and affectionately of the relation that He sustains to the Father, and the Father to Him, and the union which exists between himself and his disciples. "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye shall see me, because I live ye shall live also." "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be with me, that where I am they may be also and behold my glory." In these utterances of our Lord, He encourages the belief that the most intimate social relations will exist between Him and His saints. And when He appeared to His disciples immediately after His resurrection from the dead, they knew him. And there can be no doubt as to the views of the apostles on this subject. Paul writing to the Thessalonians, says, "What is our hope, our joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." The apostle, here, evidently means that he shall know those at the judgment of Christ, who were converted to Christianity through his instrumentality. And not only would he know them in the last great day, but he

would rejoice over them, as persons saved from the guilt and condemnation of sin through his labors.

The apostle John, in the Apocalypse, holds out the same idea. In his visions are represented those who had passed through fiery persecutions and the tribulations of martyrdom, and stood before the throne of God. "After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and honor, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen."

Here the apostle saw those multitudes who had reached, or should reach, heaven; and still bearing those peculiarities which enabled him to distinguish between the different nations who were represented before the throne of God. And not only is that distinction retained by the kindreds and tongues, but their appearance must have been different from that of the angels, or else he could not have spoken of the latter as a distinct class. Now if all personal and national identity be destroyed, and all those marks obliterated whereby we know one person and one nation from another on earth, the moment the redeemed enter their future home, how could

the apostle have known that that multitude was composed of the various kindreds and tongues of earth? And if the glorified saints do not lose their national identity, is not the inference a legitimate one, that they will also retain their personal identity? And would not the loss of those various aspects of human form and appearance which are peculiar to individuals on earth, and the throwing the society of heaven into one uniform mass, divest that abode of that order and beauty which the scriptures ascribe to the heavenly world? It would do violence to all our feelings and hopes, while the rejection of the doctrine would strip our future home of some of its brightest attractions, and fill us with regrets at least all through our earthly pilgrimage.

But it appears, also, from some intimations of Scripture, that angels know each other. Gabriel, when assigning a reason for the delay occasioned on his mission to the prophet, ascribes it to certain hindrances which he experienced on his way. "Fear not, Daniel," he says, "for from the first day thou didst set thyself to understand and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but lo! Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." From this it would appear that angels know each other; and if so, may we not safely conclude that a like privilege awaits the children of God?

But we have still more positive grounds upon which to base our argument. We are assured by the Evangelist who describes the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Hermon,

“that Moses and Elias were present, and communed with Jesus concerning the work of redemption which was approaching its completion.” And while the disciples were overwhelmed with the resplendent glory which shone upon that Mount, Peter exclaimed, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. Let us build three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.” From this language it appears that the disciples knew Moses and Elias, although they had never seen them on earth. And does not the fact afford indubitable proof that saints shall know each other intuitively? The presumption is certainly very strong, that if Peter, James, and John, knew the great lawgiver of the Jews, and him who stood at the head of the prophetic school, though they had lived some thousand years before, and now appeared in their glorified natures, that the saints will immediately recognize each other upon their entrance into heaven. We might adduce additional inferential proof from Scripture in support of future recognition, but perhaps none which bears more pointedly upon the doctrine; and we think that this is amply sufficient to establish the fact, if we do not demand demonstrative proof where moral certainty is all that ought to be expected.

But there is yet another source from which we may obtain some light on this subject. I mean the declarations of departing souls. Many incidents might be adduced, which ought to confirm us in the belief that we shall know each other in the spirit-world. It may be alleged, however, that the mind is in a wild and delirious state for hours previous,

as well as during the dissolution of soul and body; and that those forms which the dying profess to see are nothing more than images of beauty, which are the offspring of an excited imagination, and therefore prove nothing. But while we are prepared to admit the force of this assertion in some instances, it would be unjust to ascribe all such manifestations or visions of the departing to the same cause. Where there is no undue excitement of the brain, and no extraordinary nervous sensibility, but where the conversation and appearance of the individual are collected and cool, and where to the very last moment all the indications assure us that reason is neither clouded nor driven from its throne, we are bound to exercise some confidence in the truth of their dying declarations. Take, for example, the martyr Stephen. He was in perfect health, and, therefore, free from the exhilarating influence of disease or medicine; "but he, being filled with the Holy Ghost, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." He could not have been mistaken about what he saw, for he was speaking under the influence of inspiration, and, therefore, could not err. Beside this case from Scripture history, we might adduce others where the dying spoke of the presence of angels and sainted friends. I have heard with my own ears many glorious declarations from dying Christians of what they felt and saw. A beloved sister, when passing into the valley of the shadow of death, commenced uttering what she felt, and describing what she saw, until the glory of the invisible world seemed so fully present to her soul, that she was

overwhelmed and lost in wonder, and said, "O! I cannot tell you all; but you will see it!" and as the words "beautiful, beautiful," trembled on her lips, she expired. Another whom I attended in his last hours, but who was a wicked man, carried on a rapid and protracted conversation with what seemed to be evil spirits, until suddenly stopping, he said distinctly, "We will now adjourn until one o'clock, and then we will rally all our forces against the great throne;" and precisely at the designated hour he breathed his last.

But a highly interesting case is mentioned by a gentleman in one of our religious papers, which is yet more to the point. "A little girl," he writes, "in a family of my acquaintance, a lovely and precious child, lost her mother at an age too early to fix the loved features in her remembrance. She was as frail as beautiful; and as the bud of her heart unfolded, it seemed as if, won by that mother's prayers, to turn instinctively heavenward. She was the idol of the family; but she faded away early. She would lie upon the lap of the friend who bestowed a mother's care upon her, and winding one wasted arm about her neck, would say, 'Now tell me about my mamma.' And when the oft-repeated tale was told, she would say softly, 'Take me into the parlor, I want to see my mamma.' The request was never refused, and the affectionate child would lie for hours contentedly gazing on her mother's portrait. But—

"Pale and wan she grew, and weakly,
Bearing all her pains so meekly,
That to them she still grew dearer,
As the trial-hour drew nearer."

“That hour came at last, and the weeping friends assembled to see the little child die. The dew of death was already on the flower as its life’s sun was going down. The little chest heaved spasmodically. ‘Do you know me, darling?’ sobbed the voice that was dearest ; but it awoke no answer. All at once a brightness, as if from the upper world, burst over the child’s colorless features. The eyelids flashed open, the lips parted, the wan, cuddling hands flew in the little one’s last impulsive effort, as she looked piercingly into the far-above. ‘Mother!’ she cried with surprise and transport, and past with that breath to her mother’s bosom.” Who that has witnessed such instances can, for a moment, doubt the doctrine of future recognition.

Other instances might be cited, but I will rest this doctrine upon the testimony of each one’s consciousness. Out of the holy depths of our nature we may hear a voice say to us, “*we shall know each other in heaven.*” God has given certain voices to our spiritual being ; and whenever these are heard in favor of any subject which is clothed with an air of mystery or obscurity, we have reason to believe that the utterances are true. The yearnings of our nature, and the perfection of our happiness, assuredly require a recognition of those whom we loved on earth, and in whom were our richest springs of earthly joy. Blessed be God that we have ground to believe and reason to hope that we shall see our sainted friends, and know them “even as we are known.” And what an influence should this doctrine exert upon the mind of the Christian? It should inspire him with a holy

watchfulness over his own heart, that he may not come short of that "rest which remaineth to the people of God."

It is a sore trial to endure a separation for a few years; but who could endure the thought of being eternally exiled from their home in heaven? The prospect of reunion with his beloved, should constrain him to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset him, and to run with patience and diligence the race that is set before him." And O! what a motive he has to labor for the salvation of his children, brothers, sisters, wife, or other dear friends with whom he would walk by the river of life. Christian parent, have you ever *felt* that your child might be *lost*? Do you see how the temptations are multiplying around it, and that there is a growing inclination to give way to their urgency? Do you see the silken threads of pride, and the golden cords of pleasure, binding its immortal spirit to the dust? O! fortify its heart against those temptations; hasten to cut those cords before they become powerful as the folds of the monster. Turn the eyes of those you love, away from these fading glories, to that bright inheritance at God's right hand. Turn their aspirations to a crown of glory and a garland of life, and teach them that the highest honor within reach of mortals, is to be a son or a daughter of the Lord Almighty. Beg them to become reconciled to God *now*. Speak to them of the horrors of a final separation, and the joys of eternal union. And carry with you to the closet the weight of their souls' salvation, that your utterances and cries may rise bathed with atoning blood to the ears of the eternal God, that the arm of Jehovah

may awake to their deliverance from sin. Or if all are adopted into God's family, or have already gone to rest, suffer the delightful assurance that you shall know and love them in heaven, to reconcile you to this temporary separation which death induces. But if unconverted and without hope, should not this prospect at once lead you to the Saviour's feet, that you may be washed and sanctified? O! what motives are addressed to you from yonder world, if you are impenitent! Perhaps a beloved child bends from these seats of glory with beseeching looks, and would constrain you to turn to God! A dear departed mother may yearn over you with all her maternal affection! A father, a husband, a wife, a brother, or sister, or friend — ay, perhaps all these, are calling down to you, now, to close in with the overtures of mercy. But I will not attempt to urge their pleas; I will pray God that He may plead his own cause and theirs with you. And O! that they may descend in the persuasive influences of the Holy Spirit, and carry your affections to the skies. And then with the Christian you can look forward with joy to that hour when you shall join the ransomed host above. And who can picture that rapture which will thrill the bosoms of the glorified throng, as they are joined in everlasting bonds of love. To those hills of life we often look, and over those plains of light and glory does the eye of our faith fondly wander, for there are those whom a mysterious but wise Providence has removed from our fold. And to those heights of glory where the redeemed now rejoice does our hope carry us, and there do we expect one day to hear all the voices which once

charmed us on earth, mingling with our's in the great anthem of redemption that shall rise and swell and roll in lofty grandeur around the throne of Jehovah forever and ever.

“I count the hope no day-dream of the mind,
No vision fair of transitory hue ;
The souls of those whom once on earth we knew,
And loved, and walked with in communion kind,
Departed hence, again in heaven to find.
Such hope to Nature's sympathies is true ;
And such we deem, the Holy Word to view
Unfolds ; an antidote for grief designed ;
One drop from comfort's well.
Nor shall we find
More joy from aught in that celestial seat,
Save from God's presence, than again to greet
Each other's spirits, there to dwell combined
In brotherhood of love.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS WITH AFFLICTED AND BEREAVED SOULS.

“Like the sweet melody which faintly lingers
Upon the wind-harp’s strings at close of day,
When gently touch’d by evening’s dewy fingers,
It breathes a low and melancholy lay ;
So the calm voice of sympathy me seemeth ;
And while its magic spell is round me cast,
My spirit in its cloister’d silence dreameth,
And vaguely blends the future with the past.”

HUMANITY may justly boast of its sympathy as an excellent grace and a priceless jewel. It is that fountain in our nature whose streams gladden, refresh, and beautify life. Cheerless, indeed, would be our existence, were we doomed to spend it among beings who had no fellow-feeling for us ; for it is the blending of hearts and the mingling of spirits, that create and sustain social happiness. It is even painful, occasionally, to meet with one whose sympathies are chilled by a heartless selfishness—a man who feels not, and cares not for his companions in the race of life. For such an one moves within the narrow circle which self-love forms, and never passes beyond that circumscribed sphere to drop a tear upon some desolate hearth, or to utter a word of hope to a desponding

or heart-broken fellow creature. The sympathies of others may distil, like gently descending dews, upon spirits made weary; and weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice; but he who remains unaffected, like a mountain of ice, chills the atmosphere around him. He labors and traffics, and schemes and accumulates; but only for himself. He is an object of pity, because destitute of those sensibilities and generous impulses which belong to our nature, and he is only a man in the outward form. We regard him with the same feelings with which we look upon a tree scathed and blighted by the lightnings of heaven, without leaves or fruit, and even incapable of casting a refreshing shadow. We all need sympathy, and should, therefore, bestow it upon others. And who has not felt its strange power to lighten the burdens of life, and to extract the sting from disease, and the bitterness from sorrow. The help of man may be vain; but the sympathy of friends is precious. You behold a fellow-traveler oppressed with a load, in his estimation too heavy to be borne, and he sinks exhausted and faint to the earth; but a word of encouragement from you will impart new energy to the weary pilgrim, and even a look may inspire him with fortitude to toil on in hope. And this may be done without subjecting yourself to any inconvenience; certainly without loss, and always with great gain, forasmuch as every act of kindness exerts a reciprocal force upon the agent, and leaves its heavenly impress upon him, while it adds a fresh gem to his character. And the consciousness of having dispelled gloom, or diminished

the woes which were brooding over the spirit of a fellow being, is a rich compensation to those who delight in doing good. To administer comfort to the children of sorrow, and to utter bright words into the ears of mourners, is like opening a crevice and letting sun-light into the gloomy dungeon where prisoners of misfortune are pining away. The prisoners of Providence are often in darkness; their faith is feeble, and they need to be assured that when all within is dark, the Sun of righteousness still shines, and that they need but look, and they will behold the healing beams streaming through their clouds of calamity; and that although they despair because of the weakness of their confidence in the Divine promises, they will gather strength from the assurance that Jesus is an Almighty Saviour, that when they are weak, He is strong, and that, therefore, the foundation of their hopes remains unshaken by that storm which has agitated and overwhelmed their souls. Those who in seasons of trial have shared in the sympathies of others, know how precious it is to have the bleeding heart bound up by gentle hands, and the anguished bosom soothed by those who know from experience what it is to pass through the deep waters of affliction. The sympathy of such, is like oil to a painful wound.

“If there be one that o’er thy dead,
Hath in thy grief borne part;
And watch’d through sickness by thy bed,
Call this a kindred heart.”

But after all has been done for us which sympathising friends are capable of accomplishing, they may still leave the

wound unmollified and the heart unhealed ; for although they may comfort, they cannot effectually heal. And one design which a merciful Father has in sending us bereavements, unquestionably, is to convince us that we need a Divine helper. I had once planted a few vines, and hard by them erected a substantial frame-work upon which they might find a support in the storm ; but they clung to each other, and after rising a little distance from the earth, they fell to the ground and their growth was dwarfish and their fruit rotted, and I said to my beloved, Here let us learn a lesson. These vines are a picture of ourselves. We foolishly and fondly cling to each other, our affections fasten their tendrils upon beings as frail and destitute of strength as ourselves, and when calamities befall us, we sink together in our weakness ; whereas, if we lay hold upon the Rock of our strength, and send our affections on the wings of ardent prayer and faith to the bosom of God, they will twine their tendrils around the eternal throne, and we shall stand to show forth His praise, when the universe falls. If we have erred in placing too much dependence upon an arm of flesh, God may have withered that arm, that we might lay hold upon His. The Lord often dries up the fountains of earthly comfort, that we may fly to the streams of living water. He takes away friends, that He may cause us to seek the friendship of Him “ who sticketh closer than a brother.” Jesus only is able to afford us grace and strength to bear the trials He appoints for us. And blessed be God ; He never withholds His consolations from the sorrowful who seek them ; nor does He deny shelter

to the distressed who fly to His bosom for refuge. And what is still more important, He possesses infinite resources, and is, therefore, amply qualified to furnish an antidote for all distresses ; and where they cannot be removed, He overrules them for His glory and our good. He, at whose word as it rang through chaos, the universe sprang bright-robed and glowing into existence, can call forth light and joy in the darkly desolate heart. He who caused the morning stars to sing, can wake up songs in the night of our affliction. For He need but speak, and it is done ; and whether we can or cannot always see the hidden energy which controls the tempest, we know who has commanded our peace when our troubled breasts find repose.

The sympathy of Jesus is one of the most pleasing attributes of His character. There is much in the person and life of our adorable Redeemer which mankind must always admire. Indeed, every thing which pertains to His humanity and Divinity is possessed of a loftiness and grandeur which inspires admiration. He is unlike man even in His human feelings and actions ; or rather, we behold in Him humanity sinless and godlike. Viewed as an individual in contrast with other distinguished characters, He stands out in lonely grandeur, as the Alps among the little hills, or the sun in the firmament of stars—massive, spotless, and sublime in all His aspects. Like the towering mountain upon which the storms of centuries have spent their energies, He stands unshaken, and sends the healthful influences of immortal life over our afflicted world. I have stood on the spot where the

gifted orator swayed with his eloquence the listening multitude as the leaf-burdened branches of the forest are swayed by the winds of heaven, I have communed with many of the distinguished living, and with more of the illustrious dead, but when I follow Jesus Christ on His journey, and visit in thought the places where He taught, and labored, and suffered, and died, I am conscious of the presence of an awe-inspiring majesty which I experience nowhere else. In no society, and in no place, do I feel as I do in His presence. There is none like Jesus. For I see in Him a wisdom unfathomable, and a power illimitable; I behold in Him a beauty more radiant than that of the flowery landscape, a love broader than the earth, a glory more dazzling than the glowing heavens, and a sympathy wide and durable as eternity. And while some of His attributes, such as omnipotence, omniscience, and justice, breathe a deep solemnity over my soul and fill me with awe, His sympathy draws as with gentle chords, and makes me bold to tell Him those secret sorrows which I dare not utter in the ears of mortals. And if there be none who can be affected with the story of our woes, "He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points like as we are." "He is the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." One of the objects of His incarnation, doubtless, was, that He might become familiar with all that human nature can endure. And having himself been oppressed, and afflicted, and stricken, and smitten, He is able to succor those who are tried. Having endured a hotter furnace than He allows any

of His children to enter, He knows full well the degree of heat which is adequate to the removal of the dross from the gold ; and beyond that point His goodness will not suffer the fire to prevail. No language could so fitly describe His humiliation and destitution as His own. "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." When the beasts of the forest are hunted and pursued, they can fly to their rocky dens and repose in safety ; when the heavens grow dark and the storm howls, the fowls of the air fly to their little homes and are sheltered ; but O, amazing thought ! the Lord of the universe, whose providence throws its sheltering wings over all these creatures, Himself stood as a rock in mid-ocean, while all the storms of affliction to which man is heir, mingled with the billows of Divine wrath, were breaking over His innocent head. And why did He consent to such a distressing humiliation ? Why did He, the adorable One, move through the deep valleys of earth, and not choose its high places as the field of His labors, and as the sphere of His beneficence ? He had an object in view, and it was this : that however humble, neglected, and tried might be the lot of His children, His sympathies might reach them. He descended to the lowest depth of suffering that His people might feel assured that while the Redeemer's sympathy and love fill the highest heights of heaven, they also extend their influence to the deepest depths of earth. And now there are none so far down in sorrow and distress but He is cognizant of their feelings ; and the heart which pulsates

upon the throne of universal dominion thrills in sympathy with their sufferings. Earth has no vales resounding with notes of anguish and cries of lamentation from those who are threading their way through streams of affliction, where the voice of Jesus may not also be heard, saying, "When thou goest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee."

We may enjoy the society and counsel of sympathizing friends; but beyond a certain extent their efforts to relieve are powerless; but the sympathy of Jesus is joined with a power which reaches the farthest wo, and relieves in every time of need. In illustration of this point, let us turn for a moment to the history of our Saviour's life. Behold Him one morning as in haste He leaves Capernaum with His disciples. He presses forward toward Nain without pausing a moment by the cool brook to take a refreshing draught, or turning into the grove by the wayside to find shelter in its grateful shade from a hot summer's sun. He is on an errand of mercy. The distress of a widowed mother was present to His omniscience and awakened His compassion, and He hastens to the town where she lived, that He may restore her lost treasure. About midday he reaches the city, and is met at the gate by the funeral cortege. When He saw the infirm and broken mourner following her only son to the grave, His sympathies were kindled, and He said to her, "Weep not." "And he touched the bier, and they that bore him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And He delivered

him to his mother." Here was an exceedingly touching and beautiful instance of His sympathy with the bereaved. A lonely widow, who was deprived of her only stay and support, excited our Lord's compassion, and He exerts His omnipotence to bring her relief. He recalled life into that inanimate form, and again there was a warm heart to love her and to cheer her solitude; again there were hands to procure her bread, and once more there were lips to pronounce that rapturous word, *mother*.

A father comes to our Lord and cries, "My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." Although he is not of the house of Israel, Christ does not repel the suppliant, but accompanies the ruler to the chamber of death, and there recalls her to life. Ah, who can estimate the preciousness of the Saviour's sympathy to this ruler? As he was a man in authority, he, doubtless, had other friends who pitied him, and who mingled their tears with his; but the sympathy of Jesus was associated with a power through which this man was again put in possession of his child.

But the most affecting incident of this description connected with the history of Jesus is the exhibition of His tenderness at the raising of Lazarus. The family of Bethany largely shared the friendship of the Saviour. Two sisters and one brother composed that family "whom Jesus loved." On one occasion, during His absence from the hospitable house of these friends, sickness came, and Lazarus was prostrated upon a bed of affliction. With fearful hearts did

those fond sisters watch around the bed of their beloved brother, and carefully did they note every stage which the disease might assume. Now hope would illumine their countenances, as his eye brightened and his fever slightly abated; then again, as the symptoms became unfavorable would fear cast its shadow upon their brow. O, how anxiously did they long for the Saviour's return. They had despatched a messenger for Him, and sufficient time had elapsed for Him to reach their abode, but the Lord has not yet come, and the brother grows worse. Often did they look out in the direction from which they expected Him to come, but there was no indication of His approach, and again they returned to the bedside, weeping in all the bitterness of their hearts. The first day has passed, and another, and still another, and yet are the watchers alone. Slowly yet rapidly does the time roll on; and as the midnight hour, which so often marks the crisis of disease, comes, it brings no hope; nay, it increases their alarm, for he was manifestly sinking. Another hour is passed, and the struggles of nature with disease are feebler; his tongue ceases to articulate responses to their affectionate inquiries, and his eyes grow dim, so that he can no longer see Martha and Mary. Gently he sinks until the dawn of day; and just when the orb of heaven bathed the hills of Palestine with his golden light, the sun of Lazarus set in death. And now those sisters are overwhelmed with sorrow, why does the Master not even come to comfort them in their distress? But these sisters did not bear their grief alone. Beyond Jordan there was a heart

which shared their woes, for Jesus said to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead, let us go to him." They came, but not to be present at his burial; neither did Mary and Martha know when the Lord would come. Their brother was laid in the sepulchre, and they sat down in sackcloth to lament the dead. After the lapse of four days it was announced that the Master had come; and when Mary had approached into His presence she fell down at His feet, saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him."

“Then the Jews who came
Following Mary answered through their tears,
“Lord, come and see!” But lo! the mighty heart
That in Gethsemane sweat drops of blood,
Taking for us the cup that might not pass;
The heart whose breaking cord upon the cross
Made the earth tremble, and the sun afraid
To look upon his agony — the heart
Of a lost world’s Redeemer — overflowed,
Touched by a mourner’s sorrow! Jesus wept.”

What a sublime lesson do those tears teach the children of sorrow! I have seen the parched earth, when it seemed crying to the passing clouds to descend in refreshing showers; and I have looked out upon the face of nature after those dark chariots of heaven had wept themselves empty upon the thirsty plain, and the whole earth looked up reflecting from her tears her grateful smiles back to Him who “prepareth the rain.” And so have I seen desolate and weary souls con-

suming and wasting away under the slow fires of grief, until the dews of a Saviour's sympathy descended upon them and clothed them with the graces of submission and resignation, and in whispers such as angels utter, I heard these comforted souls breathe the words of Gethsemane — "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

And how often like those two sisters in their grief, do Christians feel as though they sorrowed alone, that the Master does not pity! But they knew not that the stroke which smote Lazarus with death, was felt by Him beyond Jordan; and so, also, when the cords which bind us to loved ones break, their vibrations are heard in heaven, and the weight of that blow which prostrates a disciple to the earth and sends anguish to our bosoms, is also felt in the heart of Him who is seated on the throne of universal empire. And it could not be otherwise, for the head must feel when a member of the body suffers. He is the vine, we are the branches, and no affliction can befall the branch, without a draught upon the sympathy of the parent stem. This is what the apostle means by His being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." And this is what we need in this suffering world; an assurance of His interest in our trials. For if we are united to the Lord Jesus by a living faith, our burdens are partly borne by Him. As He once addressed the multitude who were groaning under bodily and spiritual burdens, so does He still invite the suffering — "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rest from guilt and sin; rest from all your grief and anguish. Among all

the examples recorded in Scripture for our encouragement under affliction, there is not one that has not left its testimony of the gracious aid and unfailing support which the Lord grants his children in their day of trial. When Job was visited with the most distressing calamities, and suddenly deprived of his property, his children, and his health, he could still bless God. And although he did pass through a fiery ordeal, God so overruled his afflictions that they issued in an increase and enlargement of temporal and spiritual blessings.

We have a beautiful exhibition of the sympathy of Jesus, in those charming discourses which He addressed to His disciples, shortly before His crucifixion. When He saw the effect which the announcement of His suffering and separation from them had produced, He strove to comfort them, and to dispel their sadness by words of hope. "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." He was not insensible to their sorrows, and, therefore, consoles them, and tries to reconcile them to a brief separation by pointing to those glorious mansions on high, where they should enjoy His presence and society forever. And what language of tenderness flowed from His lips when He spoke to those who were afflicted to tears by beholding His sufferings! While under the painful pressure of that cross which He was bearing onward to Calvary, He looked around and saw the women weeping as they followed; and unmindful

of His own anguish, he kindly said, "Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me." And in the last hour of His indescribable and excruciating sufferings, His sympathy for His mother was manifested in those memorable words addressed to her and the beloved disciple — "Woman, behold thy son ; son, behold thy mother." And when His death had fallen with stunning power upon His disciples and friends, He lost no time after He arose, to bring them words of comfort. And first of all, to His mother. When Mary had come to the tomb and found it empty, she turned aside and stood weeping until addressed, as she supposed, by the gardener ; she asked, Where have ye laid Him ? And Jesus said unto her, "Mary." That voice and that word breathed a heaven of glory into her soul, and in an instant she was at His feet. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father ; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." And to the two disciples, who journeyed to Emmaus to relieve their hearts from a painful oppression and gloom, and who were sad as they communed with each other of the strange event which had blighted their hopes, He drew near and joined in their conversation, and unfolded to them the scriptures, until their hearts warmed within them under the gracious revelations which He poured upon their minds ; and at last He made Himself known, in the breaking of bread. Filled with joy, they hasten back to announce the glorious news to the other disciples, and while they were yet speaking, "Jesus stood in their midst, and said, peace be with you."

Had the heavens suddenly opened and let down upon them the glory of the upper sanctuary, they could not have been filled with greater joy. Jesus was with them, and it was enough. And ever since that memorable period, there has been no chamber of sorrow where His followers wept; but Jesus appeared to sympathize and to comfort. Not, indeed, in a visible form; but by His word and Spirit, and with the energy and power of His grace. Behold that mother who is watching over her last loved one on earth, experiencing all those dreadful pangs which rend a loving heart: when the only remaining earthly cord which binds her to this life is breaking, she looks upon the sufferer and then to the throne of Christ, and in full assurance of faith she cries — O! Jesus, I give him to thee! And thus bereft of every earthly friend, there is present to her an invisible Comforter, who, as she looks forward with trembling on that journey which she must tread alone, says to her soul — “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end.”

That the Redeemer sympathizes with His people in their afflictions and bereavements, and will afford them relief, is further manifest from the multitude of encouraging promises which He has left us. “He will not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed.” The prophet Isaiah, the notes of whose prophetic harp were never so eloquent and sublime as when he sang our Saviour’s character and mission, exclaims, in one of his descriptions of the God-Man, “And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the

shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And again he represents Him as commissioned "to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort the mourner, to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

When David was hunted like a bird, and found refuge in the cave of Adulam, beyond the reach of his enemies, he still felt the importance of enjoying the sympathy and protection of the Messiah, as he said, "When my heart is overwhelmed within me, I will cry from the ends of the earth, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." And having been led to that refuge for sinners, he sang, "Thou art my rock and my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." And during a severe affliction and depression of spirit, he exclaims, "All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God." Amid the discouragements and fierce conflicts to which Luther, the great Reformer, was subjected, his soul always found comfort in singing the forty-sixth Psalm: "God was his refuge and strength, and a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore would not he fear, though the earth were removed, and the mountains were cast into the midst of the sea." However

wearied and faint with the burdens of life, he could drink from those exhaustless streams fed by the river of Divine love which make glad the city of God. And thus, also, may every believer refresh his soul in times of distress. He can go directly to the Saviour for sympathy and aid. He can say, Here, Lord, are Thy promises uttered by Thy Prophets, by Thee, and Thine Apostles. Thou hast told us to cast "our burdens upon thee, that thou mayest sustain us." Thou hast given Thy Gospel that we might have peace. Thou hast said, "in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And Thy servants have exhorted us "to cast all our cares upon thee." If we urge His own promises with an humble and believing heart, He will answer our prayers in their fulfilment.

Such was the experience of the primitive disciples, and hence Paul writes to the Corinthians — "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." From this declaration we perceive that the sympathy of Jesus is associated with actual consolation, which sustains those who are united with Christ. According to the views of Billroth, Winer, and others, the sorrows endured by Christ repeat themselves in the believer; and likewise the comfort and the glorification experienced by the Redeemer. And this same apostle still farther magnifies the consolation with which Jesus sustains His followers, when he writes—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." A multitude of

illustrious examples might be cited, to show how cheerfully and triumphantly the Lord carries His people through the most formidable tribulations. When two of His ambassadors were cast into a foul prison, wounded and bruised, such was the sustaining power which He imparted, and such the joy and consolation with which He filled their hearts, that at midnight they made their dungeon resound with songs of praise. Martyrs and confessors who were in sympathy with Jesus, were so mightily strengthened in the inner man, that they could not only bear the flame, but were in raptures while their bodies were consumed by the slow fires of martyrdom. And all that cloud of witnesses, so eloquently described in Hebrews, who also encompass us, still assure us that the love, sympathy, and power of Jesus are all enlisted in the cause of His suffering people.

The presence and sympathy of the great Redeemer, therefore, constitute a rich legacy, to which His followers may at all times lay claim. And the excellence and importance of this legacy it is impossible to estimate. He is our elder brother, and has, therefore, a fellow-feeling for us. And while this sympathy is high as heaven and ample as immensity, it also possesses this advantage, that the blessings which flow from it are exhaustless. There are fountains on earth, which send forth copious and clear streams; but the season of drought comes, and when nature has most need of such supplies, they flow no more. And thus, also, from the sources of earthly pleasure and human comfort, there may issue refreshing waters in time of abundance and health, but all

these are cut off or exhausted in the hour of bereavement and death. It is not so with the sympathy of Jesus; coming from the infinite and unfathomable depths of His nature, it will flow on when our desolation is greatest—when our souls are “in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is,” this stream continues to gladden and refresh our weary spirits. It is not affected by those changes which dry up the springs of temporal enjoyments, only that its blessedness is better appreciated, and its influences are multiplied. It is this sympathy of Jesus which gives us the joy of security and the triumph of victory. It was in view of the conscious union of the believer, with Christ, that the Apostle breaks forth in the language of triumph, as he looked to the cross, the tomb, and the throne of the Redeemer, and exultingly asks, “If God be for us, who (or what) can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." What a grandeur is here thrown around the Christian! He is elevated above and beyond himself. He triumphs not in himself, but in Christ. All afflictions, and all manner of evils are trodden under his feet. The love and sympathy of Jesus, raise him to the exalted position of a partaker of the Redeemer's glory, so that he can stand by the throne of the great Mediatorial King, and look out upon the universe and claim all the resources of God's dominion for his defence and protection. He can lay hold of the arm of Omnipotence, and draw round about him the energies of Jehovah as his bulwark, and shout in the midst of this impregnable enclosure where no evil can reach him, and where the love of Jesus fills his soul unutterably full of glory. O! ye bereaved, tried, and disconsolate ones, hasten to this refuge! Come to this sacred and safe retreat; for here are the green pastures, here is the fountain of living waters flowing fresh, free, full, and glorious, while God cries to a weary world — "Ho! every one that is athirst, come ye to the waters of life."

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE HOME.

“There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,
Where man, creation’s tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride;
While in his softened look benignly blend
The sire, the son, the husband, brother, friend.
Here woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow way of life;
In the clear heaven of her delightful eye,
An angel-guard of loves and graces lie;
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet.
Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found
Art thou a man? a patriot? look around;
O, thou shalt find, howe’er thy footsteps roam,
That land thy country, and that spot *thy* home.”

THE word *home* has a singular charm and an unutterable power. It is a mysterious combination of hidden forces and delightful associations; so that, whenever it is uttered, our heart-strings vibrate their sweetest melodies. For helpless infancy and enfeebled age, for rich and poor, for the humble and exalted, it has an energy and beauty which no other

word possesses. It brings before the mind the place where human spirits blend most intimately, and where they share each other's joys and woes. Home! who loves it not? The exiled prince sighs not more for his palace than the banished peasant for his hut. In whatever clime we journey, whether in the frozen north or sunny south, under the soft sky of Italy or among the mountains of Switzerland, in the populous cities or the dreary desert, almost every object which we behold will wake remembrances which will cause our hearts to turn instinctively to that beloved spot where we have made our abode. And yet, amid all the elevating and joyous influences of our earthly homes, there is a restlessness of spirit which leaves the conviction upon the mind that there is another and a better home. The aspirations of the soul rise above and beyond all earthly associations and institutions. Every thing around us reminds us that we have here no abiding city; that we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, and must, therefore, occasionally realize that we are destined for a higher sphere. The spirit of man seems, moreover, conscious of its origin, and longs and pants for its home in the skies. It is from the assurances of the Holy Word that heaven will be the Christian's eternal home, that we draw our greatest comfort when we are called to part with friends on earth. Those who fall asleep in Jesus are at once taken to that blessed abode which God has provided for His saints; and seeing that our present existence is rapidly running to its close, we look forward with joy to that hour when we shall meet our sainted friends in the mansions of our Father's house. And the

more we may be able to fix our affections on that blessed abode, the better shall we be able to endure earthly trials and bereavements. Among the primitive Christians death was spoken of as a sleep; and when one of their number died, it was said he has fallen asleep. When the Moravian brethren announce the death of a friend, they say he has gone home. And does it not take from death its bitterness and terror when it is regarded as a transition into the joys of eternal life? It assuredly moderates and soothes our grief when we look upon our departing as going home. In view of the quieting and soothing influences which heavenly meditations, in connection with other considerations, breathe upon the troubled soul, I feel as though I could not more fittingly close these consolatory lessons than by directing the reader's attention to the Christian's future home.

That there is such a place as heaven, and that it is the home of the redeemed, is susceptible of the clearest demonstration. Admitting that there is a future state of existence for that mixed multitude of souls which now people the earth, reason would suggest the propriety of a place exclusively consecrated to the holy. Here they are annoyed and wearied by the corruptions and pollutions of this sinful world, and it is but just that those who faithfully serve God, and wage a continual warfare against sin, should at last find an abode where they shall be secure against its aggressions upon their peace. And the Scriptures so abundantly and clearly affirm that there is a blessed home for the righteous, and a rest for the people of God; and the yearnings and convictions of all

men so fully coincide with the teachings of revelation on this subject ; that an array of elaborate proof would be superfluous. Granting, then, that there is no question as to the fact of its existence, the first inquiry which demands our attention is that which relates to the locality of our future home. Where has God established the residence of His people ? Of this we cannot speak with absolute certainty ; yet is the opinion universal that it is above us. It may, however, be said, and that with truth, that such expressions are indefinite, for the obvious reason that that which is above us now will be beneath us twelve hours hence, on account of the earth's motion. But that it lies, however, beyond the starry firmament is justly inferable from the manner in which the Bible speaks of it, and also from the language of our Lord and His apostles. The Word of God speaks of three heavens. First, the atmosphere ; as when Jesus directs attention to the sleepless care of Providence over the fowls of the air, which neither sow nor reap, but are cared for and fed by the hand of God. And also in other places in the Scriptures do we read of "the fowls of heaven," and "cities walled up to heaven ;" in all such phrases nothing more is meant than the air. The second meaning of the term is applied to the firmament, or the "sidereal heavens." "When I consider the heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained." And lastly, we have the imperial heaven, the glorious residence of God and His holy ones ; or, as it is sometimes called, "the third heaven ;"—the place to which Paul was elevated during his

trance, and where he heard and saw things which it was not lawful to utter. This classification, or division, originated with the Jews; and hence the different significations of the term, when applied to different objects, were understood by them. The Apostle, in one of his epistles, says that Jesus ascended above "all heavens;" and by that he certainly meant, and was doubtless understood to say, that Christ rose beyond the starry firmament to the abode of Deity. And it would also seem to be in harmony with our conceptions of the fitness of things, to suppose, that heaven is the central point of the universe of God. I do not know that we have any clear intimations in Scripture which would justify this supposition; but it is absolutely certain that there is nothing in the Word of God which stands opposed to this opinion.

If we are allowed to reason from analogy on a subject like this, we might make out more than a plausible or probable proof. If we examine any thing that is systematically arranged, we shall discover that it contains some controlling principle or power, which governs the entire structure; so that every system has a central point to which all that forms a part of it tends. It is to the centre of the earth that all things within the range of our atmosphere gravitate. And in like manner, all the planetary systems have their central suns, around which they perform their revolutions. A similar principle is recognized in law, in philosophy, and in religion. The great system of Christianity acknowledges its author as its central and vitalizing power, from whom all its excellence and efficiency proceed. And thus, also, do we observe a

like arrangement in those two great moral divisions of intelligent beings in the universe. Each of these two classes has a point of confluence, or a gathering-place of their appropriate elements and influences. Heaven is the point to which all holy beings tend; the congregating place of the just from all nations, and kindreds, and tongues. And it is just as certain that all who have upon them the insignia of the kingdom of darkness, and are marked by the tokens of perdition, are tending to hell, as the central point of unmixed and unmitigated evil. And if this is a divinely ordained principle, which controls every where, and whose potency is acknowledged in all things; may we not reasonably infer that the same order is observed in those things which lie beyond the range of reason, and are matters of conjecture, or faith? And if so, is it not a warrantable conclusion, that God, whose controlling energy fills the universe, has chosen the centre of His vast dominions as His own appropriate residence, where He will perpetually reside with all His saints? The opinion certainly commends itself to our judgment, and also falls in with the gorgeous imagery of Scripture, which throws an ineffable splendor around the abode of the righteous. But if we are left to conjecture, in regard to the particular location of that "house of many mansions," prepared for the redeemed, we are not left in doubt as to the nature and employments of the place.

And here I would remark, that we have abundant reason to believe, from the many declarations of Scripture as to the appearance and structure of the place, that it is invested with

a lofty physical grandeur. Admitting that it is a place, and keeping in view the object for which it was provided, and the resources and skill of the Architect of the structure; we would naturally conceive it to be possessed of exalted excellence. The monarch who wields the sceptre of earthly empire, does not make his largest expenditures upon the improvement of his provinces and cities farthest from the seat of royalty; on the contrary, the style and structure of his palace, and the adornments of the imperial city, will share more largely in his munificence than any other portions of his dominions. The place where the powers of government reside, and the interests of state are shaped, is generally made attractive, and in most instances honored with higher decorations than any other. And is it not our privilege to believe that the home which the Ruler of the universe has fitted up for His children, will be clothed with a more excellent glory than any other part of His dominions? Such an inference is not more natural than we believe it to be just; for the imagery which Inspiration employs to represent heaven, is always of a glowing character. Our Saviour himself speaks of it under the idea of a vast structure containing many apartments. "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." And if He who fashioned the heavens and the earth, has fitted up that abode, will it not correspond with the character of His other works? And are not all His creations beautiful? There is a beauty in the winged cloud and in the circling wave! There is a beauty in the setting

sun, and in the dawn of day! There is beauty in the warbling streamlet and its spotted tribes! There is beauty in the forest, in the field, in the dew-drop, and in the ocean! Look out upon the earth, and see! Is it not beautiful, though it rests under the curse? With what a ravishing glory does it roll forth to our view, clothed in that rich and varied robe which Nature puts on in spring. Behold the mountains and continents, rivers and seas, all are arrayed with a grandeur that delights and charms the observer. But if the glorious Maker of all things has given so many visible displays of His power and goodness, and clothed with glory, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and covered the whole creation with so many visible beauties, may we not rest confidently assured, that the home of His chosen ones is invested with a transcendent glory? His own presence will make it glorious beyond conception. For while His glory gleams from every star, and shines in every sun, and is sung in every anthem of nature, all the brightness, goodness, and excellence scattered through the universe, are only rays or emanations which have gone out from Him, as the infinite centre of all that is lovely and glorious.

The physical glory of the place may also be inferred from the names by which it is known. Heaven is called the Paradise of God. The Eden where Adam and Eve dwelt was garnished with a rare excellence. A garden watered by four rivers, adorned with flowers and fountains, and peopled with every object that could excite pleasurable emotions; and yet was it only an emblem of our future home. The

apostle John describes the New Jerusalem as a city built of the most costly materials. "Its foundations were garnished with all manner of precious stones, and with walls of jasper." "A city of pure gold, and with gates of solid pearls." "And the glory of the nations was brought into it." "And a river of water clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb." "And in the midst of the street thereof, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves thereof were for the healing of the nations." "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever." And thus, also, in all the other inspired books where heaven is spoken of, do we find it represented under the most brilliant emblems. The material creation is laid under contribution for images descriptive of the physical grandeur of that blessed abode. And who can doubt that the most sublime and gorgeous figures will fall short of the reality? Nay, its blessedness and glory will far transcend even the high-wrought imagery of Inspiration. For however well-conceived and graphic any representation of it may be, the figure is but a shadow, and can never rise to a full conception of the object which it is designed to image. Could the pencil of Raphael have transferred the living grandeur of Niagara upon the canvass? Can any artist paint an evening sunset with its appropriate gorgeousness and the mellowing beauty of its vanishing glories? And if not, why should it

appear marvellous that the glowing descriptions of heaven cannot adequately or fully acquaint us with its actual perfections. The skill and resources of Jehovah have been laid out upon it. Man has constructed elegant palaces, and wrought many attractive things ; but God did not commit the preparation of that mansion to man nor angels, but His own hand has fashioned it ; and, therefore, it is doubtless true even of the physical excellencies of the home of the pure that “ eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard ; neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath laid up for those who love him.”

But the future home of Christians is also possessed of a moral glory. It is an abode of spotless purity. “ Nothing that defileth can enter within those gates.” This holiness of heaven is represented under the image of light. -Light is the only material substance that is altogether pure. Gold is not perfectly free from impurities ; and the gems which sparkle in the imperial crown are not as pure as the sunbeams which they reflect. Light may pass through an impure medium, and fall upon the stagnant and foul pool without being tarnished. And since it is not only perfectly pure, but warms and illumines the world, it is used as an image of piety and holiness. The most sublime passage, perhaps, in Milton, is his apostrophe to light : —

“ Hail, holy Light ! Offspring of Heaven first-born !
 Or of the eternal coeternal beam
 May I express thee unblamed ? since God is light,
 And never but in unapproached light,
 Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
 Bright effluence of bright essence increate.”

And as the purity and the blessings of light made it a fit emblem in the estimation of inspired writers to represent the nature and effects of religion, so also for the same reason is it appropriately used to describe the purity and felicity of heaven. Hence it is written, "And there shall be no night there." No physical night, no darkness, shall ever mantle the celestial fields; no intellectual night, no errors of judgment, no fallacious conclusions of the reasoning faculties. But above all, there will be no moral night; no impurity to stain the soul, no foul breath to pollute the air, no impure foot shall walk the golden streets, and no unholy eye shall look upon its glories. But the moral glory of that home is heightened, in view of the fact that not only the place but all the inhabitants are holy. The adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are infinitely and absolutely holy. Isaiah, in his vision, "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." "And above it stood the seraphims." "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." And in the Apocalypse the heavenly inhabitants are represented as crying with a loud voice, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, art thou, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints." And of this purity all the dwellers in heaven are partakers. All the angels are holy. And as to the saints, they are like Christ; bearing His image, and reflecting His glorious holiness, as the planets reflect the light of the sun. "He is able to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with

exceeding joy." "Then," saith the Saviour, "shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, forever and ever." "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." "The sufferings of this present time," says the Apostle, "are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." These, and many other passages represent to us the holiness of the saints. They are holy as God is holy. And what an inconceivable moral splendor must, therefore, clothe that heavenly world! What a dignity and glory would cover the earth, were all its inhabitants morally pure! But alas! it is not so here; for this world is a moral waste, with here and there a flower waked into bloom by the quickening power of Divine grace. This earth is a land of storms and tempests, of tears and woes. Here we groan, being burdened with many imperfections, and oppressed with many trials. One calamity after another sweeps with desolating power over those cherished spots where we rejoiced in the light of earthly prosperity; and we move about in that circle once radiant with joys, and vocal with voices forever hushed on earth, and fill it with our lamentations, and water it with our tears. Here we are continually reminded of the evil of sin, and the miseries with which it embitters life. But yonder we shall have passed beyond the reach of its influence; for in that home of bliss there is no curse, no sin, no sorrow, no death. All are happy, all are glowing with the glory of Christ, and all things are flashing with the holiness

of God. Blessed abode of my God! holy home of my beloved ones! may I one day rejoice in thee, and fill thee with my hallelujahs, while I lift my voice in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

It is also a happy and glorious home. There there is perfect harmony, and, therefore, perfect peace. No disturbing element can enter there to conflict with our happiness. Here we are never secure against those numerous external evils and internal corruptions which mar our tranquillity and disturb the peace of our souls. But as all those influences which agitate and afflict our spirits are caused by sin, and as in heaven we shall be perfectly holy, we shall also be perfectly happy. And besides the absence of all disturbing causes and jarring elements, the saints are also in possession of all that can possibly contribute to the enjoyment of a rational being. If it is already our privilege to drink so largely from the fountains of grace as to fill the soul unutterably full of joy, how much more will our happiness be augmented when drinking from the river which flows from the midst of the throne of God! Here in this house of our pilgrimage we have an occasional drop of refreshing; but there is the ocean of glory; for it is only beyond the grave that we shall enjoy the full flows of eternal happiness. Here we have the bud and the blossom, there the fully matured clusters.

But it is also a glorious home in view of the society of the place, and the relations they sustain to each other. The apostles speak of heaven as a house, a city, a commonwealth,

or association of believers. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Abraham, by faith, sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange land, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." "But ye are come unto mount Zion; and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." Now the grand idea in these and similar passages is, that heaven is a great family, and that God, as the Father, presides over all; and thus dwelling and rejoicing together forever in each other's society. There will be the full and perfect communion of saints. This family embraces all the distinguished good from all nations and ages. Among them will be found the parents of our race. There will be found the Patriarchs; Moses the lawgiver, and Aaron the priest. There will the sweet singer of Israel pour forth exalted strains of melody, and the lofty Isaiah will utter yet sublimer conceptions of the grandeur of Jehovah. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the prophets will mingle in the eternal song, and commune with us concerning the wonders and glories of redemption. And there will we meet the innumerable company of martyrs and confessors, those great

champions of Christianity “of whom the world was not worthy.” And there too, shall we join those with whom we wept and rejoiced on earth, and with whom we took sweet counsel ;—our parents, our children, companions and friends ; and above all we will see Jesus our elder brother, the God-Man, arrayed in the vesture of His ineffable glory.

And while the great company of redeemed will present the same variety in capacity and peculiarity of mind which distinguished them from each other on earth, there will be a perfect moral likeness. While those of lofty intellectual faculties may soar higher in their conceptions, and their thoughts sweep a wider range than many around them, they will have upon them the same moral characteristics which the humblest minds possess. All will be completely happy ; but it will require more of God and of the universe to fill the capacities of a Newton, than those of an African. They may also retain their peculiar cast of mind, so that those who have the poetic order may pour forth in flowing numbers the sublime raptures which the objects around them have kindled in their souls, while others of a different mental structure, may delight in watching the revolving orbs of light, and investigating their physical structure. But under whatever phases the intellects of the glorified may appear, they will all be conscious of the same moral exercises ; for all are partakers of the spirit of Christ, and instinct with His glorious presence. Their feelings, desires, and emotions, are all blended in those utterances of praise to which they are constantly inclined. And this moral likeness to each other

and to God, and this fusion of souls, will constitute their intercourse one of the noblest and most delightful order. This oneness of character will inspire each with love for all the dwellers in the heavenly Zion, and, therefore, secure that mutual aid, which may be required in their progress of knowledge, and in their study of the mysteries of eternity. The angels who existed before the worlds were formed, and who sang together when the creative energies of Jehovah were displayed in the formation of this earth, may unfold to our infant minds many things which will fill us with admiration and joy.

Among the elements which will enter into our happiness in that blessed home, the employments in which we shall engage will constitute a large item. To me it has always seemed an erroneous supposition that the activities of the saints are wholly taken up in acts of praise and contemplations of the perfections of Deity. That these exercises will enter largely into their occupations is morally certain; but that they are the only and exclusive employments does not appear probable. There are many other methods besides this contemplation through which the excellency of the Divine character may be discovered and admired. The history of creation will be an absorbing theme of interest and study. For with it are associated the grandeur, the might, the wisdom, and goodness of God. The extent and duration of His kingdom and being, the profundity of His counsels, and the sublimity of His power and glory, are all brought under review in the volume of creation. Communications from

those sons of light who were spectators of that event may be imparted to the saints. And add to this the fact that God will throw open to the inspection of His children the entire universe, and permit them to visit all the worlds that move in cloudless majesty through His vast dominions, and what sublime lessons will the mind learn as it sweeps over that field of immensity, studded with the magnificent creations of Jehovah! If the cultivated mind already derives its most exalted pleasures from devout astronomical studies, will it not experience infinitely greater delight, then, in viewing the motions and listening to the melodies of the spheres? And as the grandeur of God's creations was the frequent theme of prophets and inspired writers in general, and as nothing which they have written impresses the mind with a livelier sense of the might and majesty of the great Architect than their allusions to, and descriptions of, the vast materialism which He has fashioned, so is it reasonable to infer that our impressions of the greatness of Jehovah will be proportionably increased as our conceptions of the extent and magnificence of His empire will be enlarged. We cherish it, then, as a precious conviction that those heavens into whose holy depths our eyes have so often and admiringly peered will become accessible to our spirits, and that it will be our privilege to survey and explore all the worlds with which they are peopled, as we now do the earth upon which we dwell.

But another source of happiness in our future home will be the volume of Divine Providence. That book contains many chapters, which must be intensely interesting to all the

inhabitants of heaven. The first will be that which relates to our personal history. There is much in our present life which we imperfectly comprehend, and still much more that is dark and mysterious. In many things which affect our circumstances and condition, and which modify or determine our character, we may recognize the presence of a super-human agency, but cannot always know the reasons which influenced the Divine mind in its providential dealings with us. Things to which, perhaps, we now assign no higher origin than that of our own minds or foresight, may there be recognized as the legitimate products of a power behind our mental operations, which, unknown to us, controlled these in such a manner as to conduct us to the results which appeared in our life. We like to think of God as present in all things, and of His unseen hand as shaping our destinies for both worlds. For the Saviour has taught us that His providence extends to the smallest particulars of our history. A sparrow falls not to the ground, neither is a hair injured upon our heads, without the Divine permission. God exercises a watchful care over His people, and "has given His angels charge concerning them." Such is the view every Christian delights to entertain of the Divine protection. It is a great comfort to know that His eye is upon us, and His hand over us, and that His will determines our steps. I love to see my God in the spangled heavens, and hear the silent utterances of its hosts saying to my inmost soul, God is here. I love to see God in the storm that darkens and sweeps the firmament, and hear Him in the voice of the royal thunder, as it rolls

along the great archway of the universe. I love to see Him in the majestic ocean and in the quiet landscape, and hear His breathings in the soft melodies of the sighing breeze. But God is more beautiful still when I see Him in the tear of penitence, or the smile of resignation. And if such be our feelings here, with what interest and wonder will we scan those records of Providence which are at present so obscure that no human penetration can read them! Then will the life that now appears disjointed and gloomy be a brilliant chain of connected events, upon which every dark calamity endured will form a glittering gem.

In this world, "we cannot, by searching, find out God," for "His paths are in the seas, and His footsteps in the deep waters." This is generally our experience in those afflictive dispensations which befall us. We know not why God should have given us that angelic child, and invested it with such attractive charms, and endowed it with such rare powers that it drew every fibre of our hearts around it, and then just when the mind and heart were unfolding their precious treasures destroy our hopes. The loss of friends who, according to our apprehension, had not yet fulfilled their mission, or the failure of health or fortune, may be shrouded in impenetrable gloom to our minds, and yet those very calamities may be the vestures which conceal from our view the most valuable blessings which the hand of God has ever bestowed upon us. "Ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter," said our Saviour to His disciples; and thus it is with all God's people. Jacob once "said all these

things are against me." But the sequel of his history proved that God permitted those trials for the patriarch's good. And when once in heaven, where we shall have a full knowledge of the providential appointments of God, while He was fitting us for a better world, we will be constrained to praise Him for those painful incidents which here cause us our deepest sorrow. We will then see that infinite mercy dictated our afflictions, and infallible wisdom controlled them for our profit. And if not now, we shall hereafter see that all things are ordered by God. As every atom vibrates with omnipotence, so every event connected with the salvation of the soul is instinct with Divinity. For as all things are ushered into existence to show forth the glory of God ; so has He designed that each one should do so in the way which He has ordained. And as every object and event, so, also, has every individual a particular mission to fulfil, and a special work to perform. All are necessary to complete the grand design of God, and to carry out those great purposes which pervade the plan of the Divine government. And that we may accomplish our part in the great work in which God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and angels, and men, are co-workers, we must be qualified by that providential discipline, which an all-wise God sees best suited to secure this end. It is not, then, simply in the outspread and unveiled universe, that we shall behold the evidences of His wisdom, the unsearchableness of His goodness, and the glory of His power ; but also in all the great and small events which enter into our personal history.

But in the volume of Providence are also registered the histories of all those men and nations, whom Almighty power made instrumental in carrying out the purposes of redemption. It will reveal the amazing fact, that a sleepless Providence presided over all the physical, intellectual, and moral forces which were active in fashioning the history of this earth, and of the human race. So that, while men ascribed the distinction and glory of nations and individuals to their own skill and genius, and the misfortunes and ruin of others to opposite causes, the unseen power of Jehovah was the dominant force among the elements which made up the history of redeemed humanity. For "the Lord hath established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all." And from that exalted position He surveys all things, His ear hears all the whispers in the secret cabinets of the Kings and rulers of this world, and His eye beholds every rising purpose in all those hearts which are beating over our earth, and whenever and wherever He sees any attempt, or plan, to counterwork the purposes of His government, He utters the command from His throne — "Be still, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the heathens, I will be exalted in the earth." And before the power of *that* will, thrones fall, kings expire, and nations perish. And it is not an arbitrary and tyrannic rule which His Providence exercises over all things. But as the Maker and Preserver of all, the great Proprietor who has reared this immense material fabric, beautified it with a rare excellence, and filled it with immortal beings, He superintends and

controls the world and all His creatures in such a manner, that as a whole, it may reflect the glory of His perfections, and contribute to the everlasting happiness of His righteous and intelligent creatures. And, therefore, all those things obscurely visible here, will become manifest in heaven, and form exalted themes of praise and glory. No volume will ever possess richer materials for meditation, or profounder exhibitions of the omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and infinite mercy of Jehovah; and there can be no question, that the sparkling multitudes who encircle the eternal throne, will be indebted to the records of this book, for many of their loftiest and sweetest strains.

In addition to these sources of happiness in the Christian's future home, there are yet more exalted elements of glory in the occupations of saints. The mysteries of redemption will engage their highest efforts, and ravish their souls with their holiest raptures. All things else which are tributary to the happiness of the righteous are secondary to the work of redemption. That scheme of mercy will stand out alone amid all the stupendous trophies of the infinite mind, and will be invested with a sublime grandeur peculiarly its own — clothed with such an overwhelming effulgence of Divine love, that it will be as marked, distinct, and flaming among all the other works of God, as the sun in his noon-day splendor; and the lustre of all others will fade away in the superior glory of the work of redeeming mercy. And then, with enlarged and perfected capacities, our conceptions of the evil of sin, and the depths into which it had plunged us, will be clearer; and,

therefore, the greatness of a Saviour's compassion and a Redeemer's love, which elevated us to a blessed immortality, will be better appreciated than now. And as we survey the infinite dimensions of the "length, and breadth, and height, and depth of the love of Christ," our souls will exult amid the wonders of the New Jerusalem; and while we raise our ascriptions of praise to Him, and join our fellow-heirs of that glorious inheritance in the shout, "Worthy is the Lamb!" there will be such inflows of His glory into the channels of our being as to fill us with all the "fullness of God."

But it is also proper to observe, if we would rise to a just conception of the blessedness of the saints, that their holy natures will be susceptible of infinite progress, and of expansion without limit. Progression is a law of our spiritual being. As the power of motion which the Creator has imparted to the physical universe is a law which must always remain in force so long as the perfection of that organism shall continue, so is progress of the mind a law coexistent and coenduring with the mind itself. It is written upon all the intellectual and moral faculties of the soul; and they are destined to rise from one height of excellence to another through all eternity. O, my soul! what a prospect there is before thee! for there is a moment in thy future history, if ransomed by a Saviour's blood and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, when thou shalt occupy that exalted position of excellence which now marks the progress of the archangel nearest the throne of the eternal Godhead! What a sublime destiny

does eternity open up to the sanctified! The eye of faith may peer onward as through ten thousand heavens, and see one series after another of increasing and overwhelming glories rising along its path; for with God as the source and centre, and eternity as the circle and range of our happiness, we can only find fitting utterance of its vastness in the language of inspiration, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them who love him." This view gives us a faint idea of the meaning of those lofty expressions in relation to that blessed world, "a weight of glory," "an exceeding weight of glory," "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

And this brings us to the last feature of our heavenly home, and that is, its perpetuity. It will abide forever—it is eternal. This is its crowning excellence. That which greatly depreciates the value of the most desirable earthly possessions, and honors, and distinctions, is their liability to pass away; yea, the inevitable destruction which awaits them. Decay and death are imprinted upon all things. Among the properties which enter into the constitution of earthly objects, we neither find permanence nor indestructibility. God has impressed mutability upon all the works of man. No magnificent city that he has built, no stately pile nor towering pyramid which his genius has planned and his industry has executed, but hath either crumbled into a heap of ruins, or has upon it the marks of decay. No, not the most costly and durable monument of marble or of brass will remain

exempt from this inevitable doom. Man himself is an illustration of this frailty of human things; "for his days are as the grass, as a flower of the field he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place that knew it shall know it no more forever." "Our fathers, where are they?" "And the prophets, do they live forever?" Alas! what millions have gone down into the tomb, and what precious treasures does the earth hold over to the resurrection morn! Look we at our firesides and households; our families are growing less.

"Friend after friend departs,
Who has not lost a friend!"

The most lovely and happily-conditioned family has germinating within it, the seeds of death and dissolution. But the Christian dies but once, and dying, lives forever. Blessed be God! we can stand by our deserted family altars, and desolate hearths, and look up to our future glorious home, already occupied by our sainted friends, and rejoice, that decay and blight never fall upon the Christian's home in heaven.

"No chilling winds, nor poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more!"

No, it is permanent. Its foundations are laid in the immutability of Jehovah — its walls are immortality, its gates praise, and its day eternity. There it stands in its peerless glory, the metropolis of the universe, luminous with the light of God and the lamb. And amid all the changes which may

sweep with desolating power over thrones and kingdoms, it will stand radiant with salvation, and remain unshaken and unimpaired, amid —

“The wreck of matter
And the crash of worlds.”

Blessed city of God! Glorious home of my departed! may my step never falter while I tread the road to thee! May my efforts never be relaxed to make my calling and election sure, until safely sheltered within thy walls!

And may not those who have furnished inmates for that glorious home — who have watched by the pillow of the dying whom they loved, until their spirits took wing for that place of rest, derive comfort from the assurance that they are supremely blest! O! you would not, if you could, my bereaved brother, or sister, silence one of the harps of heaven by bringing back the spirit whose hand sweeps it to the praise of the Redeemer! Nay, the more you contemplate the glory of that home, and the blessedness of its occupants, the more you will become reconciled to the most painful bereavements; while the hope of entering *there*, will excite you to unremitted diligence to obtain that purity of heart, without which, we cannot see God. Aged disciple, thou art near thy home, and O! such a home! Labor patiently, thou man of toil, pray fervently, and wait calmly, for thy redemption draweth nigh! Weary, afflicted, desolate one, drink the cup which a father's hand gives, for thy night of sorrow is fast passing away; for behold, the dawn of an eternal day of glory is now breaking upon thy clouds. God grant that all

of us may set a proper estimate upon the realities of a coming eternity. And may He, "who worketh within us according to His own pleasure," kindle in our bosoms an ardent longing for that blessed abode, that while threading our weary pilgrimage through this world, we may cause the vale of our humiliation to resound with these earnest breathings of the home-sick soul.

"Jerusalem! my happy home!
 When shall I come to thee?
 When shall my sorrows have an end?
 Thy joys when shall I see?"

O! happy harbor of the saints,
 O! sweet and pleasant soil;
 In thee no sorrow may be found,
 No grief, no care, no toil.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
 God grant I once may see
 Thy endless joys, and of the same
 Partaker, aye, to be.

Thy walls are made of precious stones,
 Thy bulwarks diamonds square,
 Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
 Exceeding rich and rare.

Ah, my sweet home, Jerusalem!
 Would God I were in thee;
 Would God my woes were at an end,
 Thy joys that I might see.

Thy saints are crowned with glory great,
 They see God face to face;
 They triumph still, they still rejoice,
 Most happy in their case.

Quite through the streets with silver sound,
The flood of life doth flow ;
Upon whose banks, on every side,
The wood of life doth grow.

There trees forevermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring ;
There saints and angels ever sit,
And evermore do sing.

Jerusalem ! my happy home !
Would God I were in thee !
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see."

May such be the aspirations of our minds, and such the song of our pilgrimage, until the rays of hope which gild the distant horizon shall have melted into the glory of perfect day, and the joys which now thrill our hearts have swelled into the raptures of the redeemed, and the glorious shout echoes through the arches of the Eternal Palace — Home ! — Home ! — Sweet Heavenly Home !

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

DARKNESS TURNED TO LIGHT, OR THE USES WE SHOULD MAKE OF AFFLICTIONS AND BEREAVEMENTS.

“Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue,
Where patience, honor, sweet humanity,
Calm fortitude, take root, and strongly flourish.”

THERE is no evil whose ashes may not nourish seeds of blessing. The inundating flood and the consuming wave of fire may have swept away the golden treasures of the field, but they have left a fertilizing deposit to produce a richer harvest. And so have I seen the swelling floods of sorrow, and the consuming fires of affliction, leave the preparations of a greater good than they have taken. Having communed with each other around the sepulchres of our departed, I may hope that there is a sufficient degree of sympathy established between us, to justify me in addressing my readers on the uses which we should make of afflictive dispensations. As I have passed years in the school of personal affliction, and wept over the dust of those who were “bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh,” I may perhaps be able, under the

guiding hand of the spirit, to lead others to those sources where my own soul has gathered consolation and strength. This I shall endeavor to do, by a statement of the views which we should take of these dispensations.

And first of all, it is important to remember that God is in our afflictions and bereavements. His will determines them, and His hand brings them to pass. It is not a blind chance that checkers our life with joys and sorrows. Neither are those changes incident to the relations we sustain to others, simply the results of secondary causes acting in conjunction with our constitutional organization; for even those laws of mutation to which all material things are subjected, can only remain in active force, and accomplish their end, as long as they are vitally connected with that Almighty power, whose energy fills and animates all things. God is, therefore, accomplishing His purposes concerning us and our families through these instrumentalities, and may consequently be regarded as the author of our bereavements in all cases where persons have not, from choice, been the procurers of their own sickness, by a violation of the laws of their being. But we should also remember, that when God bereaves it is with a wise design. It is not a blind stroke, or a random blow, which prostrates the tabernacle of an immortal being. And as He afflicts not because he is cruel and delights in our distress, but out of love and for our profit, we should always expect to derive a greater ultimate good than that which we forfeit by calamity. And this we may do, even when deprived of our most cherished friends, if we improve the chastenings

of the Lord to the enlargement and correctness of our views of His character and government, of life and death, of time and eternity. God comes in these dispensations as a Sovereign, and by the sickness, the circumstances, and the time when He removes a friend, He announces the fact that "no one can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou?" Said a weeping mother to me, who had lost a child — "I could not bear it, did I not see the finger of God in this affliction." But it was not simply a correct view of His Sovereignty which gives Him an absolute right to all His creatures, to dispose of them according to His pleasure; but this attribute associated with those other perfections which make up His character, that sustained her in the hour of tribulation. She knew that He was a God of infinite wisdom, and, therefore, capable of directing all things aright, and of immeasurable goodness, and that, consequently, His infallible mind saw that it was for the good of the child, for the happiness of the parents, and the glory of His name, that He removed it to eternity. And it is not difficult to become thoroughly convinced that He is worthy of such confidence and trust at all times. But to feel this, we must look up and see Him seated on His exalted throne, clothed in all those Divine attributes which are necessary to constitute Him the all-wise ruler of the universe. And we should also know, that it is impossible for God to do wrong, for that is infinitely foreign to His nature; neither can He be mistaken as to the fitness of things, or the opportuneness of events, since all time and eternity lie open to His inspection, and He sees all the,

results worked out before He sets in motion the cause that produces them, and that, therefore, He acts not blindly, but wisely, when He visits a family with death. "Just, and strong, and opportune, is the moral rule of God."

With such conceptions of the Divine character and government, we can cheerfully acquiesce in all that His will ordains. And here, then, we are brought to the first solid ground of comfort, and the first permanent basis of good in afflictions, holy and unreserved submission to God. Peace never visits the soul alarmed in view of its sinfulness, until it bows in unconditional surrender to heaven; and light breaks not in upon the mind laboring under dark calamities, until it admits and *feels* that it is God's prerogative to bestow such comforts, or to withdraw such blessings as the counsel of His will determines best suited to secure our happiness and to promote His glory. Throw yourself upon His bosom, as the distressed child does upon that of its mother, and He will comfort you. We must not attempt to fly from God, but rush to His embrace, that His everlasting arms may encircle us, and shield us from dangers. A soul is never so lovely in the sight of God as when it kneels in humility at His throne, and breathes the prayer which came from heaven, "Thy will be done!" God loves to hear that prayer from the creatures whom He governs; for although too feeble to contend with the Eternal, or war against His providence, they may have strength, and peace, and glory, by submitting to His will. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee." "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that

obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

Seeing, then, that God moves in these calamities, and that they come with a wise design, we should further inquire what lessons he wishes to impress upon our minds. How shall we interpret the language of His providence? He comes to us robed in dispensations which make His presence awfully solemn. I should regard it as a thing of infinite moment to be placed in such circumstances. And I should carefully inquire what God means to teach me in reference to myself. Do I not hear His voice addressing me from that silent coffin in my house, and from that shrouded slumberer, “Be ye also ready?” Ready for what? For thy transition from time to eternity, my soul; to meet death, to die happy and hopeful, and to enter into the presence of thy Judge. And O, what a solemn lesson have I here to learn! what a momentous question must I decide! Am I ready to die? Have I made the needful preparation? Am I clothed in the robe of Divine righteousness? Am I justified, and have I peace with God through the Lord Jesus? O my God! help me to deal honestly with my own soul. Lord Jesus, aid me in this business of my salvation! Eternal Spirit, descend into the council-chamber of my heart, that I may act with Thy wisdom when I sit in judgment upon the great, the tremendous interests of my immortality. O my soul! awake thou to a just sense of thy condition and state before God. It is not a matter of small moment whether thou shalt eter-

nally rejoice in glory, or weep in hell. Thou art not a worthless trinket, O my soul! The wealth of the universe was too poor to purchase thee; the atoning blood of the Son of God bespeaks thy value. Thou shalt live forever. To thee eternity is no trifle; for thy capacities shall forever swell and overflow with heaven's raptures, or labor with eternal woes. O my soul! the thought is startling; it is oppressive; it gathers within it the energies of eternity; it flames and breathes with endless anguish — thou mayst be lost! Shut out of heaven, and confined in dark despair! The unquenchable fire may roll its consuming waves through the channels of thy being! The undying death-worm may writhe as a wounded monster in thy halls of memory! and conscience cause thee to utter woes wide and deep as eternity! But, must thou be lost? must a dark and cheerless future be thy portion? It must not, it will not, be thy doom, if thou harden not thyself to reject the overtures of mercy. If thou wilt hear the voice of God and obey it; if thou wilt fly for life to the death of Jesus, and for shelter from the storms of sin and affliction to the Rock of ages, cleft to make for us a hiding-place from a guilty conscience and the wrath of God, thou mayest live!

From myself may I turn to you who peruse these pages, and speak kindly but earnestly to you, touching your salvation. Afflictions form an important element among the means used in God's economy, for the awakening and saving of the soul. Trials appropriately used will tend to the sanctification of saints; and bereavements properly

regarded will utter voices of warning to the unconverted. But persons are not always converted when they are afflicted; the reason why these trials are not always effectual in leading to regeneration, is, because they are not used as God designs they should be. If an individual is not in a state of reconciliation with heaven, when he is brought under affliction, he should regard it as a messenger from God's throne, sent on a special mission to him. It says to him — "Behold I stand at the door and knock." "Set thy house in order." "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment." Be ready for your departure. And if this messenger has come to you darkly robed as he is, and painful as may be the intelligence he bears, give him a patient hearing. Let your soul ponder his lessons, and give itself to serious reflection. Let your eye run over the past, and also look searchingly within. Open your Bible and learn the true cause of your suffering. Ascribe not the calamity to secondary causes, for there is one behind these who orders and controls them. Behold God in your afflictions, and recognize in them His hand inflicting his displeasure against sin. Let the holy book unfold to you His character, while in it as a mirror you see your own reflected. Take a view of the extent and purity of the Divine law; — how it is a discernor of the thoughts, and lays its authority upon the intents of the heart. See its right to marshal outward action under its control, and command the inward homage of the soul to God. Study your delinquencies, and soon shalt thou discover that thine iniquities are infinite. Ponder the description which

Paul gives of the unregenerate in Ephesians. "Without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world." And such is the condition of all those who have not yet acknowledged "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, to salvation." "Who have not been born of water and the spirit, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus." If you belong to this class, reflect for a moment on the several aspects assigned to the sinner's state. "Without Christ." Then you are cut off from God's favor, and you are destitute of holiness, "without which no one sees the Lord." A branch separated from the parent stem has no quickening and sustaining power. It must wither and die. The soul out of Christ is barren of all good, and devoid of spiritual life. You have then no peace, for "out of Christ, God is a consuming fire." Then you cannot run to Him as your "strong tower" which shelters from earthly calamities and the retributions of eternity. You should, therefore, suffer your afflictions and bereavements to lead you to the feet of the Saviour. Come to Him, and bring with you a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and He will give you rest, comfort, and hope. None other can help you, and defend you. And if you remain without Him, what will you do in soul-troubles? What will you do when your own tabernacle is falling to pieces, and your soul is required? What will you do for an advocate when you come to the judgment? You cannot plead your own cause, "for every mouth will be stopped and the whole world stand guilty

before God." What will you do amid the fires of the last great day, amid crashing worlds, and a dissolving universe, when the crucified One will be the only refuge of the soul? Ponder these things while affliction marshals before your mind the great realities of a boundless future.

But if unconverted, then you are also an alien from God's spiritual commonwealth, and have no claim to His protection and blessing. The foreigner cannot rightfully expect the privileges and blessings of citizenship, until after his adoption as a member of this confederacy. And can we ask less for the kingdom of Jesus, than we do for a human government? Shall we approbate the ordinance in the human, and reprobate the same rule in the Divine? If not, then as a spiritual alien, you can set up no claim to God's care and blessing. Not one of the promises which gem the sacred page can be yours, until adopted into God's family, and until you have become a child and heir of heaven. For if not born again, then you are a "stranger from the covenants," in which the Lord engages to defend, and keep, and bless us. And in your distress, no one has authority to apply to you the promise — "the eternal God is thy refuge, and the everlasting arms are underneath you." Nor yet say to you; "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you." It would be unfaithfulness to God to console with His promises, those who still refuse to sue for His mercy; and it would do injury to the soul to bind it up with any other balm, but that of Gilead. We must not cry peace, where there is no peace; but admonish the soul to enter into the way of reconciliation with

heaven But the condition of the unregenerate is still more melancholy, for he is "a stranger." A stranger to grace, to purity, to hope. A stranger's condition is sad. When wandering through distant climes, surrounded by the living throngs of populous cities, or amid the varied and rich scenery of nature, everywhere and at all times there is a sense of loneliness hanging about his heart. And so, also, is he who is estranged from God conscious of an inward and aching void. It is sad when the stranger falls sick in a strange land, in a strange house, and meets death far away from the sweet influences of home. O God! how hard it is to die alone! to have no hand of affection to wipe the death-drops from the brow, no sympathizing friend to cool the parched tongue and gently smooth his passage from this world. But what will it be to die without the gracious presence of God? To have no reconciled Father to put His arm beneath the sinking soul, no Spirit to comfort, no Saviour to go with him through the dark valley—O! this is the painful end of him who has no interest in "the covenants of promise." And truly melancholy is the stranger's funeral; a rude coffin receives the shroudless corpse; a few follow to the potter's field, where his remains are committed to earth, without one tear of affection to embalm his ashes. But who could picture the disposal of the soul that passed in its estrangement from God into eternity? Eternal Mercy! what are the funeral obsequies of a lost soul? Shrouded in living flame, and buried in bottomless perdition!

But the impenitent are "without hope and without God in

the world." Another touch of darkness to the picture of impenitency. No star of hope to shine in a dark sky, to comfort in sorrow, and to sustain in death. No reconciled God. Living without God, is to live beyond the circle of His smiles, and the range of His favors. And is it not a lamentable state to be found in, when God sends death into the family? To have no heavenly Father to go to, and no compassionate Saviour to share our burdens and woes? And yet this spiritual alienation from heaven, and this comfortless state of the soul, is all the result of our choice. For in the dawn of life did the Lord already approach you, loaded with rare blessings, and say, "Those that seek me early shall find me." And behold how all along your path there gleamed the light of His favor. Along the road of life did He station heralds to warn and to invite you to become partakers of the great salvation. Every day there came on swift wing bright blessings from a Father's throne, mingled with a voice from the bleeding Jesus on the cross, uttering the invitation, "Look unto me and be ye saved," while the Spirit ever pointed in the way to happiness and to God, and whispered "This is the way, walk ye in it." And after all these admonitions produced no effect, and the droppings of the sanctuary neither softened nor awakened the heart, and when Jesus had stood knocking at your door until his locks were wet with dew, and could not gain admission into the soul for which He had agonized and bled, His amazing love was not yet exhausted, and He came in your bereavements to cut the cords which bound your affections to the dust, and carried your treasure to heaven, that your

hearts might follow it there. The kind parent does not always find the gentlest means the most efficient to mould the character of a beloved child; and thus, also, may our heavenly Father reverse the current of our affections from earth to heaven, by taking to Himself one who had been enshrined in our hearts. Very beautifully does Tholuck remark, "Is it not true that when the sun shines upon us, and we feel its gentle warmth in our life, we become indifferent to its mild beams, and do not so much as ask, whence comes the pleasant light? Because it is grateful to our feelings, we think that it is a matter of course. If any one says this is the work of God, it is said in mere *formality*. Not until the tempest comes which we dread, do we look around us and inquire, whence comes this?" O, should you then, dear reader, find yourself in an unrenewed state in the midst of your afflictions and bereavements, hasten at once, and with a penitent heart, to your Redeemer. A tear of penitence, shed by a stricken soul, is, in His sight, a brighter jewel than any of the gems with which the azure vault is studded; for that tear will draw upon it the eyes of God and His angels, and all heaven will turn to look upon the penitent, while the news rolls through the armies of the sky, "Behold he prayeth." Many motives might be offered to the consideration of the afflicted for an immediate consecration to God. It is a solemn duty. "God commands men every where to repent." And He has a right to issue this requirement; and every moment that we live in sin, we pour contempt upon His authority, and breathe defiance at the threatenings which come clothed with omnipotence.

All the great interests associated with the present and the future call for immediate reconciliation with God. And His goodness and mercy of which we are the undeserving recipients demand a cessation of this warfare with the Eternal. Is it not enough that so much of our time has been prostituted upon subordinate, if not base things? Not enough that we have so long injured our God, and crucified afresh the Lord Jesus? Is it so pleasant to live in self-condemnation, and in conflict with every principle of the Divine government? Encircled with memorials of His goodness, and ourselves the most amazing monuments of His forbearance and love, do we remain unmoved? Is there no flesh in these hearts? Alas! what blindness and hardness where men remain unaffected under influences which should be adequate to awaken the most careless, and to melt the most obdurate! Suffer me to urge one more consideration, and that is, the great danger of losing your soul if you pass through severe afflictions and painful bereavements without a change of purpose and of heart. It is impossible not to feel at all when death is at work in the circle of our friendship. The realities of eternity will agitate the soul, and the stroke of death, though it falls upon another, will open the fountains of grief, and awaken reflection; so that, if convictions are resisted, solemn thoughts pushed from the mind, tender emotions turned out of the heart, and all impressions, like marks upon the sandy beach, obliterated by the next day's tide of excitement or business, there is little hope left of that individual's salvation. For it is while the earth is rocked by the thunder,

and the shower saturates the ground, that the germs are quickened, and will spring forth if not resisted ; and thus, also, when a storm of Providence startles the soul to its secret depths, and it is bathed with the melting tenderness of a broken heart, the Holy Spirit will implant seeds of truth, which will spring up into eternal life if not crushed by an obstinate will. Such, then, is the use which the unconverted should make of their bereavements — they should make the fall of a friend the means of their resurrection unto newness of life.

But the Christian, who has already an interest in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, should also derive spiritual improvement from such trials. He should carefully examine the frames and dispositions of his mind ; for even the believer may become worldly-minded, and grow cold and formal in the discharge of his religious duties. It was spring, and I heard the winged south wind breathing around me, and I saw the sunbeams falling gently upon the earth, and by their soft caresses wooing into life many lovely and beautiful things, until the fields smiled and flowers bloomed, and forests were clad with attractive foliage ; but the sun shone on with increasing heat and brightness, and the air blew with greater fervor, until the song of the brook was hushed, and the half-open flowers withered upon the stem, and all nature lay parched and panting under a burning sky, until clouds which had been freighted by the far-off fountain and the distant sea, came and wept for pity upon that desolate scene, and it was made glad, and smiled back to the clouds which

had overshadowed and refreshed it. And so have I seen the child of God entering upon the new life in Christ, and the sun of earthly prosperity poured its light around him, and the graces of religion bloomed awhile in his heart, and his life abounded with the fruits of righteousness; but his successes enlarged and multiplied his cares, which choked the channels and dried up the streams of grace, until his life was stripped of all spiritual excellence, and his soul had leanness and was panting in "a dry and thirsty land;" and then a merciful God formed a tempest of calamity about him, which shot from its dark pavilion the lightning's bolt into that mountain of his strength, which had grown up to such dimensions between him and the Lord, that it caught the descending dews of grace that were to nourish his spirit, and the mountain fell, and the clouds of sorrow emptied their floods upon him, and he cried out, "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." But I looked again, and lo! he stood forth clothed in the light of his Father's countenance, and his piety was fresh, and his hope cheerful; and I heard him utter in sweet and grateful accents — "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Thy word." "It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes." "For I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." "Thus many shall be purified, and made white, and tried."

But in a matter of such vital concern to the soul, and on which such momentous interests are pending, it will be well for us to consider more particularly the advantages which the

Christian should reap from afflictions and bereavements. From the moment of our conversion, we are placed under that moral discipline which the Infinite Mind sees necessary to the development of that style of character which the Lord would have us possess. Those immortal jewels with which the crown of Jesus is to be gemmed, need grinding and burnishing rightly to reflect the excellence of His religion here, and His glory yonder. A certain providential course of training is needed in conjunction with the constant operations of the Spirit, to carry forward without interruption, the work of sanctification towards its completion in Christ. For all who have any knowledge of their own hearts, are assured that, even after renewing grace has commenced doing its office, it meets with many obstructions in its gracious work. We are so earthly in our dispositions and feelings, and are so constantly associated with tangible objects, that it is only by extraordinary and superhuman influences, that our affections can be fixed, *abidingly fixed*, upon those things which are at the right hand of God. And even with all our watchings and struggles for freedom from worldly entanglements, the wings of the soul are often trammelled and bound by the network of sensual influences which a world hostile to grace throws around them. Even friends, companions, and children sometimes usurp that sanctuary in our souls, which should be filled with the awful presence of Jehovah. And if we strive to maintain God's appropriate supremacy in our affections, the objects of our human love bind with strong cords our spirits to the dust. And hence it is for our own

good when God breaks these bonds, either by crushing the idol, or by taking our friends to himself. The Master is intent upon weaning us from the things around us, and this is never so effectually done as when He comes in sickness and in death. It is on such occasions that we learn the lesson, that however indispensable these family ties are to our existence and happiness, they are only the road through which we pass, and not the end of our being. Amid the scenes of home-desolation, we are impressively taught the vanity of earth, and the worth of heaven. And if ever we do form a just estimate of the shortness and value of time, and the greatness of eternity, it is while bearing the companions of our journey to their silent homes.

It should be the holy determination of God's children when sickness comes, to make it and its issues tributary to their spiritual good. For it must be very obvious to all who are acquainted with the laws of our being, and the tendencies of afflictions, that they cannot and will not leave us as they found us. They will make us better or worse. They will make their subject humble or rebellious; bring him nearer to God, or drive him farther from Him. The gold, in passing through the furnace, will acquire greater purity, and, therefore, greater value; or it will be burnt, and rendered worthless. And so, also, the soul which is not purified in its passage through the fires of Providence, will be hardened. But if any one should ask, what must I do in order to realize the benefits which afflictions are fitted to produce? I would answer, have a care how you enter the furnace. Resolve in

the beginning and on the first tokens of approaching trials, that you will bear patiently and meekly whatever the Lord appoints. Patience and meekness are ornaments of great price in the Christian character. Remember that you are in the hands of Almighty God, and that He has a perfect right to do with you according to His pleasure. But look upon Him, also, as one possessing infinite wisdom, and who is absolutely good, and, therefore, best qualified to determine how long and how severely you should be tried. Put on the Christian armor, and await the coming charge. Rest thee confidently on the staff of His promises, and lay hold upon His strength. Never allow even a silent murmur or regret to rise in your heart, and give no place to suggestions of unbelief. If the devil should tempt you with hard thoughts of the Divine Being, bid him to get behind thee. If a timid nature would generate fears, lean trustingly on Christ. Satan may tempt the child of God, and tell him that it is because he has no piety, and because God does not love him, that he afflicts; but this should not shake his faith. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore, despise not thou the chastenings of the Lord." "For he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole."

There is nothing more common than to find persons severely afflicted, or painfully bereaved, who suppose that God is angry with them. They regard their trials as evidences of His displeasure. Now such a view is totally opposed to the declarations of Scripture. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.” “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” In the language of Massillon — “the more God afflicteth, the greater is His love and His watchfulness over you. Now what more consoling in our sufferings! God seeth me; He numbereth my sighs; He weigheth mine afflictions; He beholdeth my tears to flow; He maketh them subservient to my eternal sanctification. Beloved sufferings, which in depriving me of all human aids, restore me to God, and render Him mine only resource in all my sorrows.” If, then, these afflictions are administered in love, we should receive them with a meek and quiet spirit. Imitate the patience of Jesus, whose lips never uttered a murmur, and whose heart never throbbled with an emotion of complaint, even under those crushing sorrows which He endured for a world’s redemption. He was patient and lamb-like, and with the help of His spirit we may exhibit a like resignation to the Divine will. This is what the apostle calls “being exercised thereby in righteousness.” And then will “these light afflictions, which endure but for a moment, not be worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” “For they work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Bereavements are also eminently fitted to try the character of our faith. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that

perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Although we may have conclusive evidence of the existence of a living faith in Jesus Christ, we cannot in health, and amid the smiles of Providence, form a just conception of the strength of our faith. The tree may stand well when the atmosphere is calm ; but it will depend upon the depth and firmness of its hold in the earth whether it will abide firmly amid the war and conflict of the elements. And so faith may appear to possess all the requisite properties for its endurance amid disturbing causes, but it is only when it is subjected to some fiery ordeal that the believer can know what maturity it has attained, and to what depth it is rooted in the promises and immutability of God. As long as a kind Providence smiles, and all things go well with us, it is not difficult to trust in God ; for there is no room even for a feeble faith to question the Divine goodness, so long as the outspread wings of the angel of the covenant defend us, and protect our families and homes from suffering and blight. But if the beaming countenance of a reconciled Father be covered with a cloud, and Providence frowns, and the hand of God withers our beautiful things, and we are overwhelmed with darkness and desolation, then, if our faith burns the brighter because of the surrounding gloom, we have assurance that it lays hold on eternal life. For if it keeps the soul fixed and trusting amid such scenes, then it is not the offspring of fancy, but is founded in the Divine perfections. It has come from God ; and in its outflows it passes beyond all

subordinate means, and gathers within its embrace the Rock of ages, into whose clefts it is rooted, and from which it draws its nourishment and life; and will, therefore, endure as long as that Rock stands the pillar of salvation. If detached from all human helpers, and from our own strength we cling only “to the Rock that is higher than we are,” we shall abide unshaken amid the severance of the fondest relations; and above the cries of our breaking hearts and the throes of our dissolving nature will rise the song of triumph, because our redemption is fully come. Such should be the Christian’s faith — a faith that gathers energy from the wreck of his earthly hopes. And such will be the character of that faith which is grounded upon the veracity of Jehovah, and born of the Spirit, and baptized in the blood of atonement. It will rise like a luminous pillar to the throne of glory, and fill the soul with joy, when nothing is left us but God.

Bereavements should also breathe a mellowing light upon the Christian character. Their tendency, if not resisted, is evidently calculated to make us heavenly-minded, and to bring us into closer communion with the Saviour. The trials of life should so act upon our Christian graces as to cause them to send out their fragrance to refresh the more feeble in faith, and to proclaim the glory of Divine grace.

“The good are better made by ill —
As odors crush’d are sweeter still.”

‘Affliction is the good man’s shining scene;
Prosperity conceals his brightest ray;
As night to stars, wo lustre gives to man.”

And that we may glorify God in our sufferings, let us yield up our all to Him, and cast ourselves upon Him as our all-sufficient helper. If our souls are animated with His love, and our scattered thoughts and affections be made to circle and glow around the cross, our life will become beautiful with holiness; and with a quiet and submissive spirit we can say —

“Heart, be still!
 In the darkness of thy wo
 Bow thee, silently and low;
 Comes to thee whate’er God will;—
 Be thou still!

Be thou still!
 Vainly all thy words are spoken,
 Till the word of *God* hath broken
 Life’s dark mysteries, good or ill,
 Be thou still!

Lord, my God;
 By thy grace, O may I be
 All-submissive silently,
 To the chastenings of thy rod,
 Lord, my God.

Shepherd, King!
 From thy fulness, grant to me
 Still, yet fearless faith in thee
 Till, from night the day shall spring,
 Shepherd, King!”

Come then, ye bereaved and desolate souls, with your humble brother, once more to the sepulchres of our departed.

Here let us realize that the Eternal God is our portion, that the arm which controls the resources of the universe, is stretched forth for our support and defence. Let us, then, say to our beloved ones, Rest in peace — God hath soothed our sorrows, and lifted our eyes and hearts to that home where your spirits rejoice. Dear departed ones, we will still revisit your sepulchres; but not to lament that God has taken you to Himself, but to commune with you, for it is good for us to be here.” Yea, even now we seem to hear you speak to us from your silent abodes.

“Ye good distressed!
 Ye noble few! who here unbending stand
 Beneath life’s pressure, yet bear up awhile,
 And what your bounded view, which only saw
 A little part, deem’d evil, is no more;
 The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
 And one immortal spring encircle all.”

And amid these hallowed scenes, let us bow in the name of Immanuel to breathe together our final prayer. Great God! accessible to us through thy Son, it is at Thy footstool we kneel to breathe our sad and sorrowful prayer. Thy hand hath smitten us, but we will kiss that hand, for infinite wisdom commanded, and infinite goodness controlled that stroke. Our hearts lie bleeding before thee—heal them with the balm of Thy love! Our spirits are crushed—breathe upon them Thy quickening grace! Alas! we murmured, because we understood not Thy dealings with us. But henceforth we will say, “Thy will be done.” We repent

of all our repinings, of our doubts and unbelief, of our wanderings from Thee, and of our seeking consolation apart from Thy favor and promises. And we fervently beg, that ours may be the blessedness of those whose sins are forgiven, and whose iniquities are pardoned. Our deceitful hearts have clung to vain hopes, and to vain desires. Our affections were set upon objects frail as the flowers of the field. We loved too much this world, and now that Thou hast stricken with death those whom we idolized, we have been taught that Thou wilt not yield to another Thy rightful place in our affections. Merciful God! divorced from all earthly things, join our souls to Thee. Lord, make us wholly Thine, and whatever Thou dost take away, give Thyself to us and fill us with Thy fulness. Give us a faith that pierces these clouds, and that views the paradise above;—a faith all-conquering, a love unfeigned, and a hope as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and that entereth within the veil. And O! thou adorable Lamb of God, our compassionate Redeemer, wash our souls in the fountain of Thy blood, that we may one day praise Thee in robes of white. May Thy presence go with us through this vale of tears, and in death be our portion. Commission the spirits of our sainted to conduct us to Thy throne. And on the morning of *that* day, when Thou comest on Thy great white throne, and all who are in their graves shall hear Thy voice, grant us a part in the resurrection of the just. And when ushered into Thy glory, may we find all our families and

friends in Thy kingdom, that unitedly we may gather the blessings of a happy immortality by the River of Life. And unto Thee the Father, and unto Thee the Son, and unto Thee the Holy Ghost, be honor, glory, and dominion, world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

GRAVE-YARDS AND CEMETERIES, OR THE CLAIMS
OF THE DEAD UPON THE LIVING, AND THE CARE
WHICH SHOULD BE BESTOWED UPON THE PLACES
OF THEIR REPOSE.

“Lips I have kiss’d, ye are faded and cold ;
Hands I have press’d, ye are covered with mould ;
Form I have clasp’d, thou art crumbling away,
And soon on thy bosom my breast I shall lay.
Friends of my youth, I have witnessed your bloom,
Shades of the dead, I have wept at your tomb .
Tomb, I have wreathes, I have flowers for thee,
But who will e’er gather a garland for me?”

WE have not discharged all the offices of friendship and affection which we owe to the departed, when we have consigned “ashes to ashes, and dust to dust,” amid the solemnities of our holy religion. There are other duties which we owe them, the performance of which cannot be neglected without seriously reflecting upon our character as individuals, and upon our piety as Christians. To give them a Christian burial is a simple duty ; to cherish and perpetuate their memory are marks of esteem. Our beneficent Creator has for

wise purposes implanted in all human bosoms the desire to be remembered by the living, when they shall sleep in the dust. And as none can be indifferent whether they have, or have not, a place in the affections of those whom they love, so they are also conscious of a like solicitude to retain their hold upon the memory of friends after their present relations with this life have been dissolved. And as it would be painful to us personally were we assured that we would be forgotten and neglected after our removal from this world, we should be careful that such is not the doom of our departed ones. In this, as well as in every other particular, should we bring the force of that law which is very properly styled the golden rule, to bear upon our conduct: "Do unto others as ye would have others do unto you." And as the wish is foreign to all properly constituted minds, and in conflict with the yearnings of all affectionate hearts, that when quitting the busy scenes and fond circles of earth, those whom they cherished should cease to speak gently of them, and not recall whatever of goodness pertained to their character; thus, also, we should not allow the memory of our sainted to be clouded with any uncharitable thoughts, or marred by unkind associations or words. The suggestions of reason, and the lessons of religion enjoin the obligation to commit their faults and imperfections with their bodies to the grave, and to enshrine within the sanctuary of our souls all that was attractive and pleasant in their history. The images of our departed should always be images of beauty, and these will grow in loveliness and grace in proportion as we are successful in the combination

of those intellectual, social, and moral, excellencies which adorned their lives. For while it is a humiliating fact that in the purest and most exalted forms of human character there are many visible defects, yet even our fallen nature is seldom found to be such a barren soil as not to produce some flowers. And not only should we gather up and combine as we would scattered gems, the virtues of those who were intimately related to us, but of those, also, who were joined to us by no other ties than those which the social law creates, or such bonds as are the offspring of a common humanity. For many of the most distinguished dead are known to us only in the results of their labors, and in the blessings with which they enriched mankind; but they are, therefore, worthy of our sympathy and regard. And the same considerations which would prevent us from thinking or speaking unkindly of those who have entered the spirit-land, should induce us to hold their reputations sacred, that we may vindicate their character when assailed, with an energy equal to that with which we would repel a wicked or mischievous charge against ourselves. Happily this is not often necessary, since comparatively few even of the viler sort of men are sufficiently heartless to be altogether destitute of respect for those who have passed away from among the living. It demands such a viciousness of character, and such malignity of disposition, that, even in this degenerate world, society is not afflicted, with any considerable number of these cowardly revilers. And yet history and experience do furnish instances where men, eminent for their virtues, and

illustrious for their varied and large benefactions, were afterwards the subjects of abuse and defamation. None are more liable to suffer reproaches of this kind than the disciples of the Redeemer, who, in proportion to their devotion to the cause of their Master, and the purity of their lives, excite the evil passions of the wicked. The children of God have always had their enemies, "for all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." And it seems as though it were not enough for wicked hands to plant thorns in the path of the just through life, since they sometimes manifest a disposition to disturb their repose in the grave. But to speak maliciously and falsely of the departed is a crime equally abhorrent with that of violating their dust.

But as there have been thousands of minds employed in framing aspersions and blasphemies, and tongues ever ready to utter them against the holy name of our adorable Redeemer, it is not marvelous that such should take delight in traducing the characters of those who are distinguished for their piety. Does not the conceited and miserable skeptic, the man of a weak intellect and a foul heart, sneer at the Old Testament saints, because of their recorded imperfections, which they deplored, and of which they heartily repented? just as though the sun could have no dark spots upon its broad disc, and yet fill the universe with light! And to what conclusion would the honest reader be driven, were they paraded on the sacred page as beings of immaculate purity? Assuredly would we be forced to adjudge the record to be false; or constrained to regard them, not as

depraved human beings, struggling against their corruptions, in their ascent to light and glory out of that moral abyss into which sin had cast them ; but as unfallen or angelic creatures. It is truly wonderful, that with their limited advantages of knowledge and revelation, they should have risen to such an exalted eminence, where their characters have stood out conspicuously to the eyes of centuries so luminous with moral glory, that their imperfections are altogether lost in the effulgence of their virtues, and would not be known at all, but for that honest confession and statement which they have left us of their own delinquencies. And is it not a matter of profound gratulation with all upright men, that, notwithstanding the force of so many circumstances adverse to the attainment of a high degree of moral excellence, they have furnished the world with such models of piety as have seldom been equalled and never surpassed, by later and more favored generations. And as the voice of calumny has attempted to darken the character of the spotless Son of God, and laborious efforts have been called forth from master intellects, to divest His miracles and discourses of all their marks of Divinity ; and as the venomous tongue of slander has sought to obscure the lives of the ancient saints and martyrs, and attempted to depreciate the excellence of all those “ of whom the world was not worthy,” and who now “ shine as the brightness of the firmament ;” thus, also, may those who have lived in our generation, but who have fallen asleep in Jesus, be assailed by the enemies of the cross. And should we be cognizant of such instances, we owe it to them, and to the

cause of our holy religion, to vindicate their characters, and to repel those assaults which they have no longer the power to meet and to refute. But as I have already intimated, it is but seldom that we may be required to speak in defence of the departed.

But there is another method by which we can silently, but effectually, proclaim our veneration and love for those who have entered their rest, and that is by exhibiting a proper regard for those places where their remains repose. The sepulchres of our departed should be treated with profound respect. They should be marked with such memorials as we may be able to rear, and kept in such a condition, that they show no signs of forgetfulness or neglect on the part of the living. The law which governs those kind remembrances of the sainted that linger in our hearts, always has a tendency to externalize what is inwardly present in some tangible outward forms. And by this means, the cords of affection which unite us to those who have passed into eternity, will remain healthy and active until they have drawn us into blissful reunion with our loved ones in heaven. And this leads me to the more important and prominent part of the subject of this chapter, viz: the duty of the living, properly to care for the sepulchres of their departed. To a refined and cultivated mind, there is not a more mournful spectacle on earth than a desecrated grave, or a neglected and over-grown grave-yard. It evokes from the soul of fine sensibilities, emotions aptly pictured by the briars and thorns which cover it. It indicates such a want of taste and

propriety, an absence of affection on the part of the living, for the dead, so unnatural and so manifestly in opposition to the lessons of Christianity, that it is difficult to account for such a singular perversion of those humane and sacred principles, with which human society is instinct. And while we conceive it to be manifestly wrong, and calculated to reflect unfavorably upon the community, where such neglect of the dead is witnessed; it is not to be presumed that they wish to show any intentional disrespect for their friends; on the contrary, it is to be inferred, that it is solely because their attention has not been specially directed to the subject. It was the frequent and melancholy spectacle of dilapidated tombs and neglected grave-yards which fell under my notice in various sections of our land, together with the hope of doing something towards removing the evil, that first suggested to me the propriety of preparing a volume on the subject of these pages.

The inhabitants of our large cities and populous towns have wisely adopted the precaution of laying-out and improving cemeteries at a distance sufficiently remote from the activities of business, to secure their dead against those unpleasant changes of place which the expansion of business sometimes demands. In many instances have the dead been removed to these places, where, it is hoped, they will be permitted to repose undisturbed until Christ shall call them from the tomb. The appropriation of ground consecrated by the sleeping dust of former generations to other uses, should be undertaken with great deliber-

ation, and consummated in the most delicate and sacred manner. For it is a well-known fact, that some such changes have been attended with very painful feelings to those whose circumstances did not enable them to provide a second grave for those whom they fondly cherished, or who were not apprised that the public authorities had in contemplation the conversion of old grave-yards to other purposes until after it was accomplished ; and, therefore, they had no opportunity to remove the remains of their friends. There sleeps now the dust of a venerable minister of God underneath the walks of one of the most beautiful squares in one of our large cities. And many others in the same place are trodden upon by the thoughtless multitude. Whatever considerations may be alleged in favor of such changes (and we believe there are generally good and pressing reasons before public sentiment would sanction them), it is assuredly painful to know that the form of a venerable parent, or a devoted friend, is continually insulted by the tread of a busy world. And if the health of the city and other considerations are absolute in their demands for such changes, then should the remains of *all* the dead be removed, at the public expense, to some suitably-prepared place where they may remain unmolested. And it affords me sincere pleasure to state that a few instances have come to my knowledge where the constituted authorities made the necessary provision for the decent re-interment of those who were raised, and ordered the transfer of the dead to their new abodes to be conducted in a becoming manner, and in strict conformity with the dictates

of humanity, and the suggestions of our holy religion. And equally agreeable is it to the writer to record with gratitude to the Divine Being, and to those through whose instrumentality those retreats of the dead were so handsomely fitted up and so tastefully adorned, the pleasure and profit he has experienced in his visits to those cemeteries in and around Philadelphia. It is highly gratifying to witness so much skill, taste, and affection exhibited in the many beautiful and appropriate monuments erected there to departed worth and excellence.

The locations are generally well, and some of them admirably chosen. The arrangements of the lots, walks, enclosures, and adornments, all abundantly bespeak the cultivated, the excellent and liberal spirit of the families who have there laid the treasures of their affection. But as I shall more particularly speak in another place of the propriety of beautifying the abodes of the dead, I will return to the matter of neglecting these sacred places. There may be, and doubtless are, many places even in our cities where little attention is shown to the graves of departed friends; but in smaller towns, and through the country, it is often with an oppressive sadness that we are forced to view the dreary and cheerless aspect of the place where the dead repose. There is one of these ancient graveyards which I visited on one occasion, that may afford a pretty accurate picture of others in different localities. It was a place of some interest, since pure and good men, and persons of distinction, were buried there. There were

also marked indications of antiquity about it. Many years had evidently elapsed since the last slumberer was received within its bosom ; and few, if any, of the families that repose there have representatives among the living. It was with some difficulty that we could enter ; and in passing through it, my heart was filled with mournful emotions, because it was in sympathy with those who had been blotted from the memory of the living. Near the entrance there were a few slabs in a tolerable state of preservation ; and with some effort we spelt out the names of those who had been the owners of those princely estates which were lying within the range of our vision. And as we passed on, we came to others that had fallen prostrate to the earth ; and the letters which made up their brief history were altogether effaced. A few of the slabs were entire, but most of them were broken ; and all sadly injured by the wasting influence of time. The graves were sunken ; thorns, briars, and thistles grew in wild luxuriance upon them ; and the only spot not overrun by them was under a wide-spreading oak, where a group of noisy children were playing, giving a yet deeper shade to the melancholy picture of neglect which marked that holy ground ; and it seemed as though there issued from those sunken and neglected mounds reproachful utterances, saying, " We have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against us."

Although this is, perhaps, not a fair index of the general appearance of grave-yards through the land, yet is there scarcely a community where you would find a field upon any

of their farms, showing such signs of neglect as we often meet with in the village church-yard. And even where the enclosures are of a substantial character, and all the facilities for improvement are at hand, there is too frequently a total absence of all ornament. There is no willow or evergreen planted, no myrtle grown on the graves, nothing to remind us of immortality, and no living memorial that the sleepers are remembered and loved. They are altogether unprotected from the broiling sun of summer, and there is not an object to break or soften the violence of the fiercely howling storm of winter.

There are many things which fall under the observation of man, that are fitted to awaken his sympathy, and to fill his mind with melancholy reflections; but it may be safely assumed, that, with a large majority of men, there is nothing which appeals so strongly and mournfully to their hearts, as the desolate and ruined condition of the consecrated enclosure of the dead. A country depopulated and despoiled by the ravages of war — a nation consumed by famine or wasted by pestilence — or a city whose inhabitants have perished under some terrible judgment of heaven; all are eminently suited to spread oppressive sensations over the contemplative mind; and yet is the feeling produced by such meditations not so intensely sad, nor so darkly tinged, as that with which we ponder a grave-yard in ruins. The travelers who move amid those scenes where the glory of centuries lies in the ashes at their feet, are conscious of the most profound and touchingly beautiful sentiments of which the soul is capable, even under the inspiration of the most stirring recollections.

Even Volney, so heartless on many other occasions, seemed to be moved with some exalted sentiments while wandering amid the ruins of ancient cities; insomuch that, in that singular mixture of error and of darkness, "The Ruins," there gleams occasionally a brilliant thought, and there flashes sometimes a just and philosophical deduction. Who could visit the ruins of Babylon, and recall her ancient glory; when she was the queen city of the east, and the haughty mistress of nations — when her astrologers and soothsayers thought they discovered such signs of permanency and strength in the frame-work of her political structure, as justified the belief, that she would never share the fate of those empires that had yielded to the slow but sure operations of the silent laws of mutation which reduce all earthly greatness to the dust, and not be filled with profound sensations of regret as he contrasted her former splendor with her present ruins? Once the renowned centre of refinement and learning; the home of Daniel and other illustrious men of those times, but now her walls crumbled back to the earth, her temples, and altars, and palaces, all mingling in a common ruin, and all her glory, except that which lingers on the historic page, swept away by the wasting whirl of centuries, and nothing remains but the sad lesson which rises from her desolation, "the fashion of this world passeth away."

And what Christian can contemplate the ruins of the Holy City, and of her temple, in which the worship of the true God was celebrated with imposing solemnities, and of the desecrated tombs of her prophets and kings, without

weeping around those venerable abodes of the dead, and sharing the emotions of the scattered but patriotic exiles of Palestine, who turn from all the ends of the earth with throbbing hearts and streaming eyes towards the sepulchres of their fathers? For, while no national sympathies invest Palestine with a sacred memory to us, our holy religion was cradled in Bethlehem, and went forth from Jerusalem; and this, therefore, has made that land which is enshrined in holy song and consecrated by a Saviour's tears and blood, one of peculiar sympathy and interest to us; yet even that city, from which flowed those streams of life of which we drink, is not cherished by us with that affectionate regard which we feel for that place where our departed repose. For while many holy associations cluster around the land whose hills and glens once resounded with the sublime effusions of the sweet singer of Israel, and while it is memorable as the place where Isaiah uttered his lofty predictions, and hallowed as the scene where Jesus first unfolded the mysteries of redemption; there is still a destiny for that land, in the womb of the future, far more resplendent with the awful and visible glories of Deity, than its past history has yet furnished; for there shall the Son of God reappear in His glorified humanity, and with all the investitures of universal royalty, reign over "the ransomed of the Lord, who shall come to Mount Zion with songs of deliverance and everlasting joy upon their heads." For whether the reign of a thousand years be regarded as literal or spiritual, there can be but one opinion among believers in the truth of prophecy, as to the

conversion of the Jews to Christianity, and their restoration to their lost nationality. But fondly as we now linger in thought around those scenes rendered illustrious as the theatre of those amazing transactions which involved the redemption of the world, and delightful as are the anticipated, because prophetic, glories which shall yet kindle upon the hills of Palestine, and shed their effulgence over the renovated earth; those graves which hold our kindred dust, should inspire a yet deeper interest, since the same God has promised that the glory of immortality *shall* kindle in those dark mansions, and go out upon an eternity radiant with the blessings of everlasting life. And those who admit the fact, that these houses of clay which are dissolved by death, shall be rebuilt, and those bodies raised and glorified shall bend in solemn worship before King Emmanuel, will not deem it a superfluous work, nor regard it an irksome task, to care for, and beautify, the sepulchres of their departed.

But to render this part of the discussion more formal and, if possible, more conclusive, I would urge the propriety and duty of making the places where our beloved ones repose attractive, and secure them from desecrating intrusions, by considerations such as the following.

First, let us examine the relation which they sustain to us. They were either venerable parents, beloved companions, friends, or our own offspring. If parents, then, as children, we are under solemn obligations to cherish their memory, and to protect their ashes. They gave us existence, so that our physical, intellectual, and to some extent our moral constitu-

tions, were immediately transmitted to us by them, as the instruments of God. They watched over our helpless infancy, and provided for all our natural and spiritual wants. They taught us to know and to love God, and dedicated us to His service. They conducted our infant feet to fountains of knowledge, and opened to our wondering gaze mines of intellectual wealth. They afforded us opportunities, and provided for us the means to store our minds with valuable acquisitions. And convinced that an educated intellect, freighted with the lore of ages, and clothed in the royal robes of wisdom, but urged onward by the impulses of natural corruption, almost invariably blights and desolates all that comes within the range of its tremendous and fearful energy, while he whose mind and heart are alike tutored and brought under the moulding and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, will be fitted to cultivate and keep the paradise which may be committed to his trust; they labored by prayer, exhortation, and example, to possess us with that intellectual and moral furniture necessary to our personal happiness, and which would fit us to become benefactors of our race. If, therefore, there is any fruit of excellence in our lives, any energy of character, amiableness of disposition, or devotion to good — any of those exalted characteristics which qualify us for the noble functions of social beings, and rank us among the successful, the honored, and useful of mankind, we should regard all these as a legitimate inheritance from our parents. Their hands planted the seed of every excellence which may adorn our character; and

when those seeds had germinated under the quickening power of the Spirit won down upon us by their supplications, they formed that atmosphere of purity, and sustained about us that element of Divine life, which are absolutely essential to crown the springing plants of grace with maturity, and to beautify them with lasting glory. And in connection with such reflections, we should also consider with what a wealth of love they cherished us. The fountains of parental affection have depths which no one has ever yet been able to fathom. And behold how, under the force of that love, they toiled long and laboriously, while they fervently prayed and anxiously watched for our good. These considerations are in themselves amply sufficient to induce a watchful care, and to create a profound respect for the ashes of our fathers and mothers who have gone down "into the house appointed for all the living."

But a higher authority may be brought forward, and more urgent reasons assigned, to establish this point. The first commandment with promise is, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This command does not simply require a respectful obedience to the wishes of parents during our minority, and regard and protection when enfeebled by age, but honor when they are dead. And do we not frequently witness the visible fulfilment of the promise annexed to that command in the distinguished blessings with which a covenant-keeping God crowns the lives and labors of those who honor their parents? And who does not commend the

spirit of those children who rear such memorials to those "who nourished and brought them up," as their circumstances will admit, and inscribe upon them affectionate remembrances of their worth. And if the monument be ever so simple, boasting of nothing but natural affection, this itself will impart to it a far higher value than art or aught else could bestow where love had been wanting.

A gentleman relates the following touching dialogue which passed between himself and three children in a village graveyard. "A boy of about ten years of age was busily engaged in placing sods of turf about a newly-made grave, while a girl, a year or two younger, held in her apron a few roots of wild flowers. The third child, still younger, was sitting on the grass watching with thoughtful look the movements of the other two. The girl soon commenced planting some of her wild flowers around the head of the grave, when the stranger addressed them :

"Whose grave is this, children, about which you are so busily engaged?"

"Mother's grave, sir," replied the boy.

"And did your father send you to plant these flowers around your mother's grave?"

"No, sir; father lies here, too, and little William, and sister Jane.

"Then who told you to do this?"

"Nobody, sir," replied the girl.

"Then why do you do it?"

"Oh, we do love them, sir."

“ ‘Then you put these grass turfs and wild flowers where your parents are laid because you love them?’

“ ‘Yes, sir,’ they all replied.”

This beautiful exhibition of children honoring their deceased parents shows that it is possible for all to place some memorial of affection upon the graves of those they love ; if nothing else, we can plant a wild flower, that it may bloom there, or a tree, in whose branches the fowls of heaven may warble carols over our venerated dead.

But if they are the bosom friends, the companions of our life, a wife or a husband, that we mourn, then affection prompts us, and the remembrance of plighted faith, and a still existing spirit-union enjoin a proper care for the places of their repose. The adorning of their sepulchres alleviates our grief, and soothes the wounded heart. It also ministers gratification and comfort to the bereaved when they know that the embellishments of the grave of their beloved arrest the attention of the stranger, and cause him to pause and learn the name of one who shared so largely in the love of others ; and his ascending sighs assure us that his sympathies have been enlisted in behalf of the parties who once rejoiced in such wealth of affection as is unfolded in memorials to the departed.

And equally strong is that bond of union which united us to those little ones who were once the light and joy of our home-circles, but who, like fragrant blossoms, soon dropped into the grave. And what offering would a devoted heart withhold from a beloved child ? Who would not place some

symbol of affection or innocence on the little grave. Let the heartless, the cold and calculating worlding, whose sympathies are with his gold, or the unsubdued and unafflicted skeptic, sneer and ask his silly question, "to what is this waste upon mouldering dust?" fool! what does he know of holy love, of a broken heart, or a desolated soul? Let those who are destitute of the finer sensibilities of our nature, and who are vulgarly gross in their feelings, ridicule the devotion of fond natures—we thank those children, those widowed companions, and those bereaved parents, for beautifying the sepulchres of their departed. Against expenditures in honor of the dead, heaven has uttered no prohibitions, and earth is not injured, but benefited, by them. All those beautiful emblems which adorn the many tombs around which we have lingered, and all those affectionate records upon them, have always assured us that we are in a world of warm and loving hearts. Were it possible, we would write every excellence, paint every feature, and breathe all the animation of the painter's pencil and the sculptor's chisel upon the memorial reared to our beloved.

And such is not the feeling of an individual or of an age, but a sentiment as wide-spread and universal as our humanity has extended. Nations of the highest antiquity laid out their skill in adorning the sepulchres of their friends, whether they moved in humble or exalted life. The labors of Layard among the ruins of Nineveh have brought under the inspection of mankind many interesting specimens of ancient sculpture, which corroborate the truth of this statement.

The Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and indeed all nations, have acted in this from a common impulse; and by their example sanctioned the custom, and thus established the fact that the dictates of Nature lead us to honor the dead, so that the relation which we sustained to those we loved rises into the dignity of a law, which makes it our duty to care for the sepulchres of our departed.

The lessons of religion also inculcate the duty which we have been endeavoring to enforce. It was the custom among the Jews to provide imposing and expensive funeral obsequies for their deceased, and to rear attractive monuments at the public cost to those citizens that were distinguished in their commonwealth either in civil or ecclesiastical life. And while the state showed becoming respect to men of eminent worth, individuals frequently prepared costly tombs for themselves and families while they were yet living. Although this was the practice for many generations, yea, for centuries, God, who never failed through His prophets to reprove them for whatever wrong they committed, never uttered a word of disapprobation against this custom; and it is, therefore, our privilege to claim for it the Divine sanction. Instead of being attended with any deleterious consequences, it is fraught with many blessings, since it cannot fail to exert a highly beneficial influence upon society. Such honor and respect shown to the dead often give birth to noble purposes and to exalted determinations in the minds of the rising generation. When a youth reads the excellencies of the departed chronicled upon the marble, and hears

men recount the worth of a public or private citizen, this very act may implant the germ of future greatness and of honorable distinction. For a great idea or a high resolve carries within itself an inspiration that will wake all the powers of the soul into sublime activity; so that those hidden energies which would have slumbered on, had not some outward circumstance given birth to that thought, are destined to unfold in large benefits to the world, and in brilliant honors to the individual. Thus the interests of patriotism, of philanthropy, and of religion, are subserved and advanced by those adornments of the sepulchre which contracted and selfish natures pronounce extravagant or man-worship. And in like manner are all the social and family feelings strengthened and beautified, and human nature improved in all that ennobles man by attention to the graves of the departed.

Would you then fill your country with patriots and citizens who will lay their best energies and talents upon the altar of their country, and if need be, pour out their blood at the shrines of freedom as an oblation to their country's glory? Would you draw from the seclusions of private life, men of noble endowments, of undoubted integrity, and true to the interests of the country, into legislative halls, into the Senate, the Cabinet, and the chair of State? Then suffer not ingratitude and forgetfulness to mark your actions in relation to those who have discharged with ability and fidelity, the high functions of those stations in civil life. A great intellect is conscious of its birthright to immortality. And while its

mighty energies are marshalled to arduous toil, its exertions are pleasant, and its results great in proportion as its labors are appreciated. To toil uncheered, and to be doomed to neglect and forgetfulness as soon as we are dead, would be reflections in themselves sufficiently potent to quench the ardor, and to paralyze the intellectual machinery of the greatest mind in whose eye there flames not yet an immortal crown. And although the Christian may labor with success, and with some degree of cheerfulness, when he enjoys the approbation of his conscience, and the favor of his God, yet is he greatly aided, and his labors wonderfully facilitated, by the approving smiles of those who appreciate his efforts for the good of mankind. No mind is injured by a just appreciation of its exertions for the public good; but it may be bound with leaden manacles by cold neglect. What other man would submit to such trials and privations as those of Washington, were the Father of our country now unhonored and unsung? And whatever be the force of those higher motives which heaven inspires — whatever amount of potency they may have acquired in the Christian's mind, he is still human, and although he seeks not for empty applause, yet is he cheered and stimulated to still greater efforts, by the gratitude and love of those for whose good he toils. Would Howard have traveled over kingdoms, and visited all the foul prisons they contained, had those prisoners whom he befriended in the first few instances, cast on him sullen looks, spurned his proffered consolations, and turned from him with a scowl upon their countenance, and curses upon their lips?

Ah! it was because their stern features were relaxed and glowed with joy, and their eyes flowed with tears of gratitude, that he did fly on swift wing, that he might carry his consolations to others who were wretched. And who can doubt that his eminent success with the guilty and wretched, and the charms of that music which issued from contrite hearts, won not only his life and fortune to that work of benevolence, but induced many others to follow in his footsteps. It is because his efforts were appreciated, and his memory is honored, that many others, from no higher impulses than those of humanity, have chosen for themselves a similar vocation, and become a blessing to thousands of our race. And the principle loses none of its force when brought from public into private life. A want of respect for the dead, and a total disregard for the places of their repose, would exert a debasing influence upon society. It would throw a blight over all the relations of life, and weaken, if not utterly destroy, every tie of affection. Treat the remains of the departed with neglect, suffer the enclosure where you have deposited their ashes to be overgrown with weeds, and the walls broken down, and you will place man, after the vital spark has fled, upon the same basis which the inferior animals occupy. It would assuredly degrade and brutalize the feelings of society, did such a custom universally prevail. It would diminish the affection between parents and children, for if the grave be a terminus at which all fond remembrance ceases, then the bond which unites them loses its

spirituality, and becomes altogether earthly, and partakes of that weakness, and finally of that death, which is common to all earthly things. But let grave-yards and cemeteries be kept in good condition and improved; let veneration for such places become an element in the home education of our offspring, and let it be an object on the part of their instructors on all suitable occasions, to inspire them with respect for the departed, and the happy effect of such discipline and instruction will be manifest in the tastefully decorated tombs of their deceased friends, and also in the elevating and refining tendency upon their entire character. For we hold it to be a truth which cannot be successfully controverted, that if children are taught to gather flowers with their own little hands, and weave garlands for the graves of their sainted ones, this very act will awaken thoughts which will reach to heaven, and produce such conversation as will embrace in its topics that which is fitted above all things else, to expand and purify the mind; and what is equally important, is, that the heart under such culture will be prepared for the reception of those lessons of Christianity, which are to transform it into the image of Christ, and at last conduct it to everlasting life.

The condition of a grave-yard is, generally speaking, a very good index of the character of the community in which it is located. And, if here I might suggest a lesson of advice, I would say, have a care about your confidence, and interest, and reputation among a people where you witness an air of negligence and desolation overspreading the sacred enclosure

where their departed repose. Be assured that no pure affections, no generous friendships, and no lofty principles are enthroned in hearts whose sympathies are not embodied in fitting memorials of the dead. They may affect to love you, and profess a high esteem, as long as caprice or policy may dictate; but they will cast you off as they would a worthless garment, when their own selfish ends can no longer be subserved by your presence. Butterflies are never seen in the storm; and those who profess friendship for the living, and yet neglect the dead, will prove false in the hour of dark adversity. Has that young man who is within an hour of a mother's grave, shed no tears there for months or years? Be not surprised if you should discover improprieties in his conduct, nor amazed if he should become a heartless and neglectful husband. Hearts that are worthy of the wealth of true affection, are those whose vibrations extend into the graves of their departed.

And if a church-yard be an exponent of the character of the people in whose midst it is found, so is it also a standard of their piety. That fine monuments may be constructed and appropriate sentiments may be inscribed upon them, by those who have no experimental knowledge of salvation, is unquestionably true; but it is an exception, rather than a rule. For we doubt not, that even those not professedly pious who exhibit their regard for lost friends, are often conscious of deep exercises of soul, and feel all the strugglings of new-born desires in their hearts, which they earnestly hope will issue in the regeneration of their nature.

And even where such manifestations rise no higher than the human, they still afford us the pleasing conviction that their authors are susceptible of good impressions, because they are the subjects of noble impulses. If even the motives of some could not be commended, this does by no means impair the correctness of the assertion, that the aspect of the grave-yard affords a pretty accurate idea of the religious sentiment of the community. Christianity has consecrated the ashes of saints, not, indeed, in such a sense as to entitle the departed to religious homage, or to justify any transactions of this nature ; but so as to cause them to be revered in such a manner as to secure them from neglect. An intimate acquaintance with individuals who exhibited no interest in those who had fallen asleep in Jesus, has not unfrequently left the conviction on the mind, that their piety was as cheerless and unattractive as those places where their departed reposed, and where grew the thorn, the nightshade, and the thistle in wild luxuriance. Believe it, believe it, the religion of heaven humanizes and sanctifies, while it is as diffusive as the leaven, and will work its way into all the actions of the individual in whose heart it has found a lodgment. As the leaven operates silently, while it irresistibly assimilates the meal to its own nature ; thus piety has a silent influence, which acts and speaks far more impressively than all the professions of the lip. And if any where, it is visible in its beautifying effects, in its hopeful teachings, and its glorious intimations ; it is in those manifestations of symbols and flowers, and an air of loveliness, which it gives

to the whole aspect of the sepulchres of the departed in a truly Christian community.

But there is another, and as I think, a much higher consideration, which demands the recognition and discharge of the duty which has been urged upon the living. I mean the connexion which exists between believers and Christ. The body of the saint is no longer common dust. It is no more human nature totally degenerate and corrupt; but human nature regenerated, sanctified, and exalted into living union with Jesus Christ. Leaving out of view any change or advantage which may have been imparted to humanity as a unit, by the incarnation of the Son of God, the nature of the Christian holds a vital relation to the great Redeemer. This is a necessary result from the intimate union which exists between the body and the soul. The temple is sanctified through the indwelling and pervading influences of the Holy Spirit. Through faith the soul is restored to the favor of God, and brought into fellowship with Christ. Or as Paul says, the believer is engrafted upon Christ as the living stem, and flourishes from the out-flows of grace which proceed from Him, who is the author and finisher of our faith. Hence the expressions which indicate "Christ as our life," as living in Christ, and He in us, and as living by faith on the Son of God. The Redeemer Himself has told us, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; abide in me, and I in you." "If ye abide in me, ye shall bear much fruit." And in like manner do many of the Apostolic exhortations run. "Brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service." And so, also, does the Apostle pray. "Wherefore I pray God, that He may sanctify your whole body, and soul, and spirit." The same idea is substantially conveyed in those discourses where he speaks of the members of the believers' body, as instruments of righteousness. The Christian is uniformly represented as a member of Christ's mystical body, and holds the same relation to Him as any one member of the human frame holds to the body entire. And that there is a sanctifying influence exerted upon the physical man, admits of no doubt. It could not be otherwise, for we might as well attempt to show that it is possible for a living member of our body not to be visited with the flows of life from our hearts, as to maintain that the physical nature of man is not animated with the influence of divine grace. For the blood does not more thoroughly circulate through all our mysterious framework, and through all the members of the body, than the hallowed power of the life of Christ in the believer pervades the entire man. This is very forcibly expressed in that passage of the Apostle where he says—"Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost." The body is that temple in which the awful presence of the Godhead is manifested. The Lord Jesus assured His disciples that He and the Father would come, and with the Spirit make their abode in them. Thus saith the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; also with him who is of an humble heart, and a contrite spirit." Now it is in virtue of

this union with Jesus Christ, who, by his incarnation, death, and resurrection, has not only purchased for our souls the blessings of a glorious immortality, but has also given us assurance that our bodies shall be raised from the grave, and participate in the blessed realities of eternal life. This temple of the Holy Ghost is doomed to fall into a heap of ruins; but however long it may lie in that condition, it is still in unison with Him who will one day reconstruct and invest it with a more gorgeous glory than when first reared out of the dust, and impart an indestructibility to its properties that will make it coexistent with the immortality of the soul. "It were a light spirit which should not be overawed amid the ruins of a temple, which should recognize nothing solemn in the mouldering pile which it knew had once canopied the more immediate presence of God, especially if it further knew, that on some approaching day the ruins would be reinstated in symmetry and strength, forming again a structure whose walls should be instinct with Deity, and from whose recesses as from awful shrines should issue the voice of the Eternal. The dead body is that fallen temple which was consecrated on earth as the habitation of the Holy Ghost; it decays only that it may be more gloriously rebuilt, and that God may dwell in it forever above. Therefore, it is no slight impiety to show contempt or neglect of the dead." Such is the eloquent language of a great and good man who had just conceptions of the dignity of the human body. O! it is not a spirit of pride or vain ostentation that we would call into being and foster, by pleading for the departed, and by appro-

priately adorning the places where we have laid our beloved, but to awaken and strengthen those Christian sentiments and those sublime hopes which invest with the sanctity of heaven, the abodes of the dead. For the tomb of the Christian should not be so much regarded as the "house of corruption and of worms," as the refining crucible which shall yield up the glorified form, all glowing with the lustre of a blessed immortality. For that body, like a seed, carries with it into the tomb, a germ which will be waked into immortal life and beauty by the light of the resurrection morn.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were distinguished for those protracted and bloody wars carried on between the Christians and the Infidels, who were contending for the possession of the Holy Land which contained the Sepulchre in which the Lord Jesus had lain. It was customary in that age to make pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre, and it being in the possession of the Mahomedan power, those individuals who, under the influences of a mistaken piety felt it to be their duty to visit, at least once in their life-time, the tomb of Jesus, were often molested and even murdered by the hostile power. This, in connexion with other circumstances, led to those long and fearful conflicts which are familiarly known as the Crusades. And such is the importance which those of a corrupted Christianity attach to relics and sacred places, that even quite recently the Holy Sepulchre was the theme of diplomatic discussions, and has, or is, destined to enter into the treaties of some of the European powers. There is, unquestionably, a vast deal of superstition mixed

with those proceedings, forasmuch as there is no absolute certainty as to the precise locality of that sepulchre in which our Lord was laid by the pious Arimathean, and even if this were certain, that body which reposed there for a few days, is now at the right hand of the Father. But if that tomb were definitely known, would not thousands against whom the charge of superstition could not lie with any force visit it? Or if it were accessible to us, who would not regard it as a great happiness to weave garlands of flowers with which to adorn the enclosure that was once honored as the abode of the pierced body of our exalted Redeemer? Ah! yes, we would cherish the spot as a holy shrine, and lay out our skill to clothe it with beautiful decorations, and lavish upon it offerings of our gratitude. But our glorious Saviour has left us His solemn declaration — “Whatsoever ye do to one of the least of these my brethren, ye do unto me.” The dust of His saints is as precious to Him as His own body; for it is instinct with His life. His sleepless eye is ever upon it, His Providence guards and defends it until the dawn of that day when He shall recall it to life, and clothe it with glory. That dust is far more precious in the eyes of the Lord, than all the gold and gems on earth, and, therefore, honor and respect shown to those who sleep in Jesus by beautifying the places of their repose, is rendering honor to the Redeemer. It is, therefore, in view of the estimate which Christ sets upon the bodies of His people, and the promised and magnificent destiny that awaits them, that we urge the duty of bestowing proper attention upon those places where the “trump of the

archangel will cause a stirring of life, and Christ shall win new triumphs as the resurrection and the life." Let us, then, ornament those holy scenes where our kindred repose, with emblems of fond remembrance, and with tokens of that glorious hope which will terminate amid the grandeurs of a blissful eternity.

As a further legitimate proof of the propriety of caring for the dead, I may also cite the example of the early Christians. The customs of those upon whom the light of Apostolic ages shone, are invested with a sacredness which usually secures for them a high degree of respect; so that they are departed from, by those of like faith, only when the weightiest considerations demand it. Ecclesiastical historians inform us that the apostate Julian commended the early Christians for the care which they bestowed upon the dead, and for the manner in which they cherished them. Writers of the third and fourth centuries inform us that they adopted the custom of the Jews and Romans in the erection of monuments to their departed. During those periods when the fires of persecution raged most violently, they were excluded from the public burying grounds, and, therefore, forced to dispose of those who died in the most secret manner. To escape the notice of their enemies, and to secure their departed from being disturbed, they constructed their sepulchres under ground. "By far the greater number," says a writer on Christian Antiquities, "of primitive Christians were buried in subterranean sepulchres." "These served at once as their home and their burying-place; and, as it was natural that they

should wish to have the bodies of their departed brethren conveyed to the same peaceful and inviolable sanctuaries, it became first from necessity, and afterwards from choice, the approved and invariable practice to deposit their dead in deep and obscure caverns. Among the monuments of Christian antiquity, none are more singular than these abodes of the dead ; and one feels at a loss whether most to admire their prodigious extent, the laborious industry that provided them, or the interesting recollections with which they are associated. Like the Moorish caves in Spain, they were generally excavated at the base of a hill, and the entrance so carefully concealed that no aperture appeared, and no traces were discernible, except by an experienced eye, of the ground having been penetrated, and of the vast dungeons that had been hollowed underneath." But after the cessation of those fiery trials through which the Church had fought her way, when Christianity had gained the ascendancy over Paganism, and become the dominant religion in the Roman empire, they fitted up and consecrated suitable places for this purpose around their churches. And at a still later period the custom of burying distinguished personages within the walls of the church was established. That they bestowed great care upon the tombs of their departed, and were accustomed to embellish their grave-yards and erect costly monuments, is evident from the reproofs which some of the clergy of that age administered in several instances, where these things were carried to a degree inconsistent with the spirit of their religion. But while Chrysostom and several other Fathers rebuked the

extent to which the decorations of those places were carried, they never condemned the erection of appropriate memorials, or the practice of showing other becoming honors to the dead.

And finally another reason why the fitting up of cemeteries and the adorning of grave-yards should be encouraged, is that drawn from the influence which these things will exert upon the living. If these places are skilfully laid out, and the graves adorned in a tasteful and appropriate manner, their cheerful aspect will divest death and the tomb of a vast deal of that terror which is naturally associated with them. There is something dark and forbidding about the dissolution of the soul and body, which causes human nature to shrink instinctively from it. Death is spoken of as the King of Terrors, and as a ruthless and inexorable conqueror; so that when sickness comes with its wasting power, and hope of recovery flies, man dreads the approaching but inevitable moment when he must be brought into immediate conflict with him. Ay, it is a solemn moment when he steps into our path, and confronting us, bids us surrender our breath. And yet it is not so much death itself as that which is to follow, that makes men reluctant to die. Not to dwell upon those solemn realities into which the soul is about to enter as fitted to inspire us with profound solemnity, if not with dread, there are things this side the circle of the eternal world which have their share in producing this reluctance to depart. Among these is that forgetfulness and gloom which are so frequently associated with

the grave. To lie alone in the earth — to slumber on in the darksome tomb—to have none to come near and drop a tear of affection, or plant a flower — to moulder silently back to dust, and have briars and thorns grow upon my bosom, and be trampled underneath the foot of the unconscious brute — ah! these thoughts and associations in connection with death, are calculated to cloud the mind and to trouble the heart; and they are common where no Christian care is bestowed upon the mansions of the dead. But we may throw a more cheerful aspect over that solemn event which will sooner or later terminate our earthly pilgrimage. And since death has become a tremendous necessity, we should employ our skill to clothe it with all the light, and all those softening aspects which lie within the ability of the mind to command, that we may divest it of all that is appalling to the soul. There are a number of evils connected with our removal to eternity, for all of which, Christianity furnishes an antidote. We are required to leave many things which we value, and many objects which we love, and this would make death a mournful event, did not the religion of Christ enrich us with hopes of far greater and nobler blessings. We must surrender those pleasures which we derive from social intercourse with those to whom we are intimately and fondly united; but we pass from the society of earth to mingle with the perfected and glorified in heaven. And if we lack natural fortitude to go down into the dark valley alone, we are furnished with the needful grace for our final journey if we make application to Him “who loved us, and gave Himself for us.” Leaning

upon the strong staff of His promises, and enjoying His gracious presence, we shall fear no evil. Being thus fortified against all the painful incidents connected with death, the Christian is perfectly reconciled to the change which he must undergo. And if, in addition to these Divine influences, we adorn the resting-places of the departed in such a manner as to render them attractive, and so as to clothe them with an air of cheerfulness; the tomb is no longer an object of horror, but becomes a pleasant and delightful retreat for those who have grown weary in life's pilgrimage. Who that has a mind given to meditation, and has visited such places as Auburn, Greenwood, Laurel Hill, and other cemeteries, has not derived pleasure and profit from a walk through those charming abodes of the dead? Ay, are not the associations of such an agreeable character, that the weary and worn would be willing to lie down beneath that branching cypress or fir, and return no more to the clashing and fitful scenes of a busy world? O! is there not a charm, which even reconciles us to present trials, in the hope that we shall some day repose peacefully within that sweet enclosure, where those whom we love have been laid? Any of the weary wanderers of earth might count it a rich inheritance, if they had assurance, that when their earthly house is dissolved, their remains should sleep on the green and shady Laurel Hill where the may-flower blooms—hard by those rocks where the swallow builds her nest, and beneath those trees where the robin hymns her matins and vespers, while the gentle Schuylkill murmurs a requiem to the dead, and images to the living,

the flowing current of time, which is bearing us all onward to the bosom of eternity. Sweet abode of the dead, may those who formed thee find a Paradise for the repose of their spirits, even more beautiful than all thy monuments, emblems, flowers, and river are fitted to image to the soul.

And if like skill and taste were expended in adorning our church-yards, how much more elevated, refined, and holy would be the feelings and sentiments of those who worship the living God, hard by the sepulchres of their departed! If those enclosures were of proper magnitude, and arranged in such a manner as to afford a little retiracy from the crowd; if they had shaded walks and some humble seats along those graves where the aged and the young sleep together, O! what lessons might be learned there, by those who reach the place of worship some time previous to the hour of service. Would not a short time spent in meditation around the beautified graves of departed ones, be eminently fitted to prepare the mind profitably to engage in the worship of Almighty God? An exercise of this description would assuredly be suggestive of many and valuable reflections. It would bring the mind at once into communion with heaven; forasmuch as the transition of thought from those lowly mansions, to those which are on high, is as natural as it is pleasant. Here repose their bodies; yonder in that world of light and glory, their souls. And all those virtues with which their characters were jeweled, all that endeared them to us, and gave them favor with God and with man,

will rise vividly before the mind, and urge us to the attainment of like excellence, while it would greatly encourage us to follow in the footsteps of those, "who through faith and patience inherited the promises," and have entered their rest. Thus we would call into existence, an influence counter to that which the ill-conditioned and neglected grave-yard now exerts upon the mind; an influence potent to inspire us with a holy desire to depart and be with Christ and His holy ones. And instead of clinging to earth, and shrinking from death, and dreading the coming of the Son of Man, the cry would burst from many hearts, Hasten! hasten thy chariots, O God of our salvation! Or if the desire to enjoy those peaceful slumbers and future glories should be less ardent in the minds of some, it would at least fill them with resignation to the Divine will, and enable them to enter fully into the sentiment so beautifully expressed in the hymn of the sainted Muhlenberg.

"I would not live alway; I ask not to stay,
 Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way;
 The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here,
 Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheer.
 I would not live alway; no — welcome the tomb,
 Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom;
 There sweet be my rest, till he bid me arise,
 To hail him in triumph descending the skies.
 Who? Who? would live alway, away from his God;
 Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
 Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
 And the noontide of glory eternally reigns?
 Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
 Their Saviour and brethren, transported to greet;
 While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
 And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

I might urge yet other considerations to establish more firmly the proposition advanced and supported, but the subject is one which commends itself to the judgment of noble and good men, while it will, we trust, successfully plead its own cause with all hearts which are the home of generous friendships, of pious tendencies, and of holy remembrances. There can be no expenditure of labor, or of means, which will more richly compensate mankind, than that which is bestowed upon the sepulchres of our departed. For attractive and beautiful grave-yards and cemeteries will assist our piety, promote the refinement and elevation of society, while their influence is favorable to the exaltation of all the faculties of the soul. Their quiet, and peace, and beauty, give birth to another and spiritual law, which attracts as strongly as that of our mortality, but which, unlike that, leads us to the grave, that it may conduct us to glory. And, therefore, instead of clothing the city of the dead with gloomy associations, it may become to us a Paradise, where all those emblems and sentiments of hope and of glory, will one day glow in living immortal realizations. May God attend with His blessing whatever is contained in these pages consonant with His word, and in harmony with His will. May it be the pleasure of the Lord to smile upon this effort to create a healthful religious sentiment of respect and veneration for those who can no longer plead their own cause, save in those silent but plaintive utterances which rise from their neglected abodes, and which have prompted the author of these pages to proclaim a message from them, in

the ears of the living. And may He whose sleepless care presides over all the works of His hand, encircle us with His protecting power ; that, encompassed by His attributes, and dwelling in the secret places of the most High, we may fear no evil ; and thus when calamities darken our sky, and streams of earthly comfort forget to flow, we may find God our refuge and Rock, and our Spring of joy flowing fresh and full from His unfathomable nature, to gladden us on our pilgrimage through this “ dry and thirsty land.” O ! Thou merciful One, let Thy gracious Providence attend us through all our wanderings, and support us to the end of our days ; and when we lie down in the silent grave, may Thy sleepless eye, blessed Redeemer, watch our dust, and Thy Spirit move those, whose love and skill will not suffer a grave to lie neglected, or a grave-yard unadorned. And may it henceforth, even until the resurrection morn, be spoken to the praise of all generations, that they venerate the dead, and care for the sepulchres of their departed.

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There is nothing fanciful here—nothing bold and venturesome in speculation, nor attenuated and mystical in disquisition; but the author gives himself up in all simplicity to the leading of the Holy Spirit—follows the instructions of Scripture closely, expounds them agreeably to the soundest principles of interpretation, infuses an humble and devotional spirit into every page and paragraph of his work, aiming to lead his reader through well described paths of intelligence, love, and new obedience, into "the Heavenly Home." There is very much to enlighten those sitting in darkness, much to refresh those ready to faint through the greatness of the way, much to encourage the desponding, direct the inquiring, and quicken the steps of the halting. In a word, the volume is one that every child of God, and every one longing to bear the filial relation to him, may take up with an assurance of Divine instruction and consolation.—*Congregationalist.*

The style of this book is lucid—the thoughts glowing—the tone that everywhere pervades, is heaven-like. The author has seized upon every aspect of heaven which Scripture, reason, or imagination allow him to present, and he has dwelt upon them with the zest of a passionate expectation of dwelling therein. To aged saints in particular this volume will be very attractive.—*Journal and Messenger.*



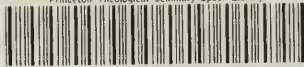








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